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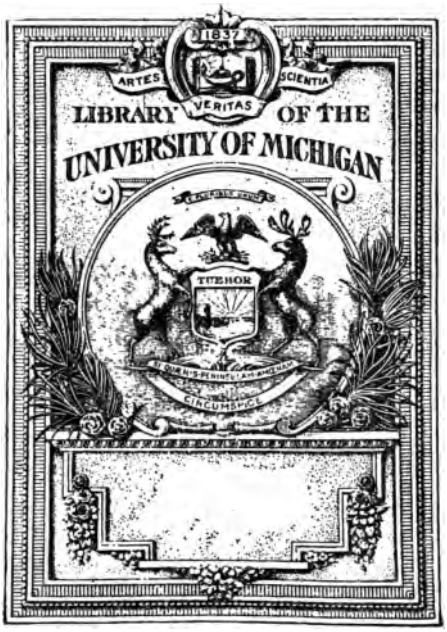
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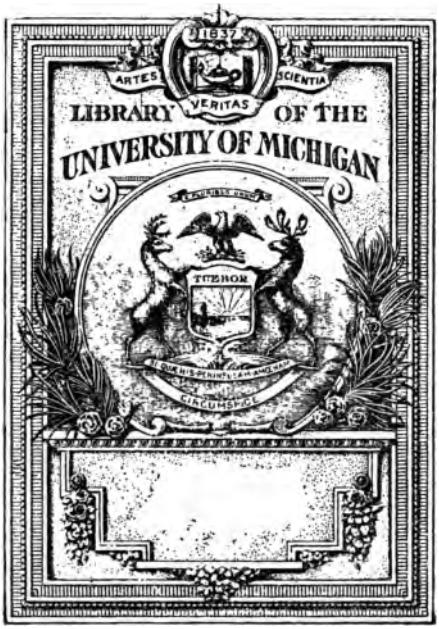
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THE PLAYS OF HENRY ARTHUR JONES

THE MIDDLEMAN

A Play in Four Acts

BY

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

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PRICE 50 CENTS

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

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SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET,
STRAND

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A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

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HENRY ARTHUR JONES

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CAUTION—This play is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States, is subject to royalty, and any one presenting the play without the consent of the author or his agents, will be liable to penalty under the law. All applications for amateur performances must be made to SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York City.

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STRAND

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CYRUS BLENKARN.

JOSEPH CHANDLER (Proprietor of the Tatlow Porcelain Works).

CAPTAIN JULIAN CHANDLER (his son).

BATTY TODD (Chandler's manager).

JESSE PEGG.

SIR SEATON UMFRAVILLE.

DANEPER (A Reporter).

VACHELL.

EPIPHANY DANKS (of Gawcott-in-the-Moors).

POSTMAN.

DUTTON.

SERVANT.

MARY
NANCY } (Blenkarn's Daughters).

MRS. CHANDLER.

MAUD CHANDLER.

LADY UMFRAVILLE.

FELICIA UMFRAVILLE.

394300

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

ACT I.

"CATERPILLARS OF THE COMMONWEALTH."

SCENE.—Drawing-room at Tatlow Hall. One day passes.

ACT II.

"MY DAUGHTER! WHAT OF HER?"

SCENE.—Work-room in Blenkarn's House. Six months pass.

ACT III.

"A WAXEN IMAGE 'GAINST A FIRE."

SCENE.—The Firing-house. Two years and a half pass.

ACT IV.

"THE WHEEL IS COME FULL CIRCLE."

SCENE.—Drawing-room at Tatlow Hall.

The whole of the action takes place in the Town of Tatlow at the present day.

The following is a copy of the playbill of the first performance of "The Middleman," at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London:

ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 27TH, 1889, AND EVERY EVENING AT 8,

will be acted a New and Original Play, of Modern English Life, in Four Acts, entitled,

THE MIDDLEMAN

By HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

Cyrus Blenkarn	Mr. Willard.
Joseph Chandler (of the Tatlow Porcelain Works)	Mr. Mackintosh.
Captain Julian Chandler (his son)	Mr. Henry V. Esmond.
Batty Todd (Chandler's managing man)	Mr. H. Cane.
Jesse Pegg	Mr. E. W. Garden.
Sir Seaton Umfraville	Mr. Ivan Watson.
Daneper (Reporter)	Mr. W. E. Blatchley.
Vachell	Mr. Royston Keith.
Epiphany Danks (of Gawcott-in-the-Moors)	Mr. Cecil Crofton.
Postman	Mr. T. Sydney.
Dutton	Mr. Rimbault.
Servant	Mr. Hugh Harting.
Mary (Blenkarn's Daughters)	Miss Maud Millett.
Nancy (Blenkarn's Daughters)	Miss Annie Hughes.
Mrs. Chandler	Mrs. E. H. Brooke.
Maud Chandler	Miss Agnes Verity.
Lady Umfraville	Miss Josephine St. Ange.
Felicia Umfraville	Miss Eva Moore.

The following is a copy of the playbill of the original production of "The Middleman," in America, at Palmer's Theatre, New York, Nov. 10, 1890.

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 10, 1890, AND EVERY EVENING AT 8.

FIRST APPEARANCE IN AMERICA OF

MR. E. S. WILLARD

in a New and Original play of Modern English Life, entitled

THE MIDDLEMAN

BY HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

Cast of Characters.

CYRUS BLENKARN (his original character) ..... Mr. E. S. Willard.
JOSEPH CHANDLER (of the Tatlow Porcelain Works)..... Mr. Chas. Harbury.
(His first appearance here.)
CAPTAIN JULIAN CHANDLER (his son)..... Mr. E. M. Bell.
BATTY TODD (Chandler's managing man)..... Mr. Harry Cane.
(His first appearance here.)
JESSE PEGG..... Mr. E. W. Gardiner.
(His first appearance here.)
SIR SEATON UMFRAVILLE..... Mr. Sant Matthews.
(His first appearance here.)
DANEPER (Reporter)..... Mr. Percy Winter.
VACHELL..... Mr. Lysander Thompson.
EPIPHANY DANKS (of Gawcott-in-the-Moors)..... Mr. Harry Holliday.
POSTMAN ..... Mr. Sidney Booth.
DUTTON..... Mr. Hugh Harting.
MARY, NANCY } (Blenkarn's daughters). { Mrs. Marie Burroughs. Miss Agnes Miller.
MRS. CHANDLER..... Mrs. E. J. Phillips.
MAUDE CHANDLER..... Mrs. Vida Croly.
LADY UMFRAVILLE..... Miss Katherine Rogers.
FELICIA UMFRAVILLE..... Miss Maxine Elliott.

TO E. S. WILLARD.

My dear Willard,

In publishing "The Middleman" eighteen years after its production, I am sadly conscious that much of it is old-fashioned in manner and form. And if the matter and substance of the play are still interesting to playgoers, it is because the story repeats some rude enforcement of that old perennial message to the oppressor, "Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

I hope, however, that some excuse may be found for me in printing a play that has so long been popular on both sides the Atlantic. Perhaps I may claim that its publication will at least serve to show how much, and in what directions, the English drama has moved in these twenty years. But I think I can find a better justification for the appearance of the play in this form. Amongst the many thousands, perhaps millions, who have seen "The Middleman," there must be many who would like to revive in their own homes the memory of your performance of the old potter. By reading the play, they will be able to see how deeply I am indebted to you for your impersonation of Cyrus Blenkarn.

On seeing "The Middleman" a year or so ago, I was delighted to find that your performance retained all its old fire and passion, all its old charm and variety. So far as I could remember and compare, it did not sensibly differ from the perform-

ance on the first night, so fortunate and memorable for both of us, August 27th, 1889. It had mellowed, but it had not decayed: it had, perhaps, gained in sweetness, but it had not lost in strength.

In asking you to accept the dedication of "The Middleman," I am glad to renew in public the personal thanks I have often rendered to you; and to own how much of the success of the play has been due to your singularly powerful and impassioned realization of Cyrus Blenkarn.

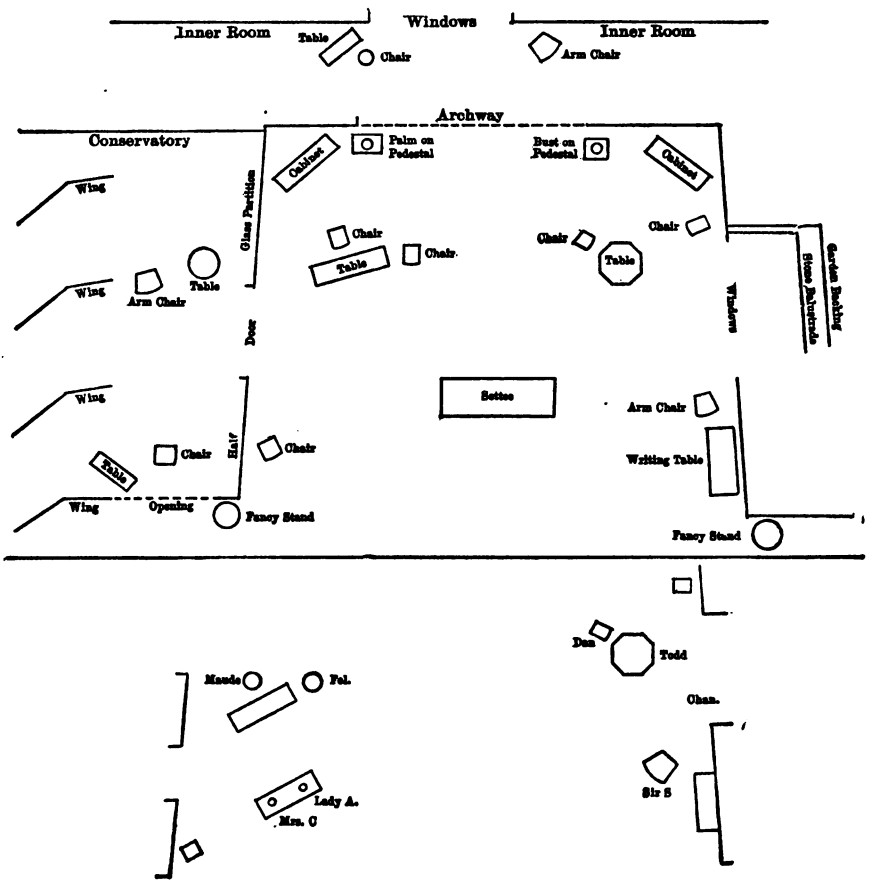
I am,

Always faithfully and gratefully yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

March 29th, 1907.

THE MIDDLEMAN
ACT I.
Garden Cloth



ACT I.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room at Tatlow Hall. Discover* CHANDLER *at open window left addressing crowd without.* DANEPER[1] *taking notes of speech.* SIR SETON UMFRAVILLE *yawning left.* LADY UMFRAVILLE *and* MRS. CHANDLER *on settee.*[2] MAUD *and* FELICIA.[3] BATTY TODD[4] *applauding and shouting "Bravo" in a very enthusiastic manner. As curtain rises, great cheers are heard without.*[5] *When the cheers subside,* CHANDLER, *a smug, fat, prosperous-looking man of fifty, with the manners of an upper class commercial man, continues his speech.*

[1] *At chair right of* L. C. *table.*
[2] C.
[3] R. C.
[4] *Above table left.*
[5] L.

Call 1.

Band up.
CHANDLER (*Proofs*).
TODD (*Note-book. Yellow favour*).
DANEPER (*Note-book*).
SIR SETON.
LADY U.
MRS. C.
MAUDE.
FELICIA.
JULIAN.
DUTTON (*Tray*).
DANES (*Favour*).
MARY.

CHAN.

(*continuing speech with considerable hesitation*) Yes—gentlemen—as your worthy mayor has called me—a King of Commerce—ah—ra—I'm proud of the title—(*Shouts outside* "Hear! Hear!" *Cheers continued.* TODD *always cheering and clapping his hands*) I'm proud of representing that great commercial spirit of the age which—ah—ra—has made England what she is to-day—(*Cheers outside,* "*Here! Hear! Bravo!*) Which—ah—ra—has covered her through the length and breadth of the land with—ah—ra—railways and factories and mines—and chimneys and steam-engines—and—so—on—I—ah—ra—(*gets stuck, stops.*)

TODD.

(*after a short embarrassing pause*) Hear! Hear!

CHAN.

(*floundering*) I repeat—ah—ra—which—(*looks helplessly round at* TODD).

TODD.

(*prompting in an undertone*) Energy—lofty business spirit.

CHAN.

(*primed*) That energy—that lofty business spirit that faculty of organization which provides 'about for thousands and which—ah—ra—(*slight cheers outside and a single "Bravo"*) whatever may be the result of next year's election, you—an—ra—you will find plenty of light refreshments in the Marquee. (*Tremendous cheering outside.* TODD *again very demonstrative.* CHANDLER, *looking very much relieved comes away from window to* LADY UMF. *wipes his forehead.*)

[1] L. *of him.*

TODD.[1]

(*comes down, prompting him*) Fireworks!

[2] *Todd returns to former position.*

CHAN.

Yes, I forgot. (*Goes back to window,*[2] *is received with cheers, commands silence by a gesture.*) There will be a grand display of fireworks on the lawn this evening. (*Great cheers*[3]).[4]

[3] *Repeated three times.*

[4] *Goes to* C. *Todd drops down* L. C. *Chandler comes down to Todd and Sir Seton.*

CHAN.[5]

(*very anxiously to* TODD) Well, Todd?

[5] C.

TODD.[6]

Wonderful! Eh, Sir Seton? Wonderful!

[6] L. C.

CHAN.

(*anxiously*) Candidly, Todd?

TODD.

On my honour! You know I never flatter. (*Aside to* CHAN.) I've fished up old Danks! I'll bring the old blackguard in while he's tolerably sober. (*Exit through window.*)[7]

[7] L.

(CAPTAIN JULIAN CHANDLER *enters*[8] *into conservatory, sits down moodily in chair next to table.* DUTTON *follows him with brandy, soda and cigarettes.*)[9]

[8] *Right.*

[9] *Chandler* C. *talking to Lady U.*

MRS. C.[1]

Maud, darling, where is Miss Blenkarn? (JULIAN *listens attentively*).

[1] *Seated on settee C.*

MAUDE.[2]

In her room, Mamma.

[2] *Seated up R. C.*

MRS. C.

Couldn't she be helping the servants in the tent?

JULIAN.

(*listening, mutters to himself*) No, Mother, I'm hanged if she shall. (*To* DUTTON.) More brandy! (*Takes spirit decanter, pours himself.*) You can go! (*Sits and smokes moodily.* DUTTON *goes off.*[3])

[3] *R.*

(*Reënter* TODD[4] *at window, speaks off.*)

[4] *L.*

TODD.

Come in, Mr. Danks![5] Now Daneper, my boy! Here's a pretty little picturesque incident going to happen! Dodge it up for your paper.[6] Come in, Mr. Danks!

[5] *Goes to Daneper.*

[6] *Goes back to window.*

(*Enter at window*[7] MR. EPIPHANY DANKS, *a very aged rustic, slightly tipsy and rather deaf,* TODD *conducting him to* CHANDLER.)

[7] *L.*

TODD.[8]

Mr. Chandler, this is Mr. Epiphany Danks of Gawcott-in-the-Moors, the oldest man in the county. He will shortly exercise, for the first time in his life, that franchise which the wisdom of our legislature has conferred upon him. (*to* DANEPER.) Have you got that down? (DANEPER *nods, goes on writing.*)

[8] *Conducting Danks to Chandler.*

TODD.

(*continuing*) Such is the fervour of his political convictions and his admiration of your glorious public spirit that for the mere pleasure of shaking

you by the hand he has performed the astounding feat of walking every step of the fifteen miles from his residence at Gawcott-in-the Moors. (TODD *nods direction to* DANEPER, *who replies by nod.*)[1]

[1] *Todd gets up L. to Daneper. Danks crosses to Chandler.*

DANKS.

(*shaking hands with* CHANDLER *with one hand, affectionately pawing him with the other*) Druv over in Sam Rawlins's van—me and old Bet Turney—stopped at every blessed public as us come along—la! What a morning we have had, to be sure! (*Beams benignantly on* CHANDLER.)

CHAN.

(*embarrassed with* DANKS's *affection*) Very proud, Mr. Danks, to grasp your honest hand! Very proud!

[2] *L. of table.*

TODD.[2]

(*dictating to* DANEPER) Mr. Chandler's warm and tender nature was moved to tears by this touching proof of political devotion on the part of the patriarch of Gawcott!

DANKS.

(*still retaining* CHANDLER's *hand*) Yaller, bain't you?

CHAN.

Yes, yellow is our colour, Mr. Danks.

DANKS.

I be yaller! (*Shouts feebly.*) Yaller for ever! Damn they there blues, I say![3] No more and no less! Damn 'em!

[3] *Waving his hand in the air.*

TODD.

(*dictating to* DANEPER) Mr. Danks, in a few terse, well-considered phrases, expressed the sternest condemnation of his political opponents.

[4]

CHAN.[4]

(*to Todd*) Get him away, Todd.

TODD.[1]

After your exertions you must be in need of refreshments, Mr. Danks!

DANKS.

(*suddenly drops* CHANDLER'S *hand*) Grub? Where?[2]

TODD.[3]

This way.

DANKS.

(*again insists on shaking hands with* CHAN.) Well, good-bye! (*wrings* CHAN'S *hand*) Don't you be afraid of them 'nation gallows blues! (*reassuringly to* CHAN.) *I* shall vote for 'ee. I be the oldest man in this here county! Born Epiphany Sunday, annie domino![4]

(*As* DANKS *passes* SIR SETON *he stops and wants to shake hands with him, holds out hand.* SIR SETON *doesn't respond.*)[5]

DANKS.

(*cannot understand it*) Yaller, bain't you?

SIR S.

Yellow, Mr. Danks, but inexpansive.

(CHANDLER *watches* SIR SETON, *shows annoyance that* SIR SETON *won't indulge* DANKS. DANKS *still holds out hand.* SIR S. *shakes his head, but points to Todd who immediately holds out hands to Danks.*)

DANKS.

(*effusively to Todd*) I like you! There ain't no nasty pride about you! You be yaller! So be I. (*Glares viciously at* SIR S. *shouts feebly.*) Yaller for ever! Hurray! Well done our side!

(TODD *gets him off at window*[6] *and returns, dictating to* DANEPER *who is writing throughout.*)

[1] *L. C. coming up to Danks on his* L.

[2] *Between Chandler and Todd.*

[3] *Leading him to window* L.

[4] *Todd gets Danks up to window* L.

[5] *Danks leaves Todd. Todd drops down* R. *of Danks.*

[6] L.

[1] L. *of table.*

TODD.[1]

The rustic Nestor, after a truly remarkable display of political sagacity, then took his departure.

[2] *Seated up* R. C.

FEL.[2]

What a charming circle of friends a parliamentary candidate gathers round him, Mr. Chandler!

CHAN.

[3] *Going up to Felicia* R. C. *Mrs. C. and Lady U. rise, go down to Sir S.* L.

My dear Miss Umfraville, for the good of my country, there is no sacrifice too great for me![3]

Music. No. 1. (Waltz).

(*Enter* MARY *into conservatory, gets behind* JULIAN'S *chair, speaks to him in a low tone.*)[4]

[4] *She is on his* L.

MARY.

You must go?

JUL.

(*without looking up, same tone, speaks in front of him*) Yes, by the night mail.

MARY.

(*showing great disappointment, steadies herself, speaks in a low, earnest tone*) I *must* see you before you leave. (JULIAN *looks up.*) Hush! (*Passes on into drawing-room.*)[5]

[5] *Gets to* C. R. *of settee.*

MRS. C.

Miss Blenkarn, I'm surprised you haven't employed yourself in the marquee! (JULIAN *rises angrily and comes to drawing-room door.*) The servants have so much to do on a day like this—

[6] R. *in doorway of conservatory.*

JUL.[6]

How does what the servants have to do concern Miss Blenkarn?

(MAUD *and the* UMFRAVILLES *all show embarrassment.*)

MRS. C.

I think it very inconsiderate, Julian, of a young person in Miss Blenkarn's position—

JUL.

(*interrupting*) Miss Blenkarn's position in this house is companion to my sister, and considering the obligations we are under to her father—

CHAN.[1]

(*very much upset, interrupts*) Obligations! What obligations?[2]

JUL.

Why you know, father, it was his invention that made your fortune.

CHAN.

(*terribly upset*) What! What on earth will get into your head next? (JULIAN *is about to speak.*) Hold your tongue, sir![3]

JUL.

Sir!

MARY.

Captain Chandler, please say no more! I will go and help.[4]

JUL.[5]

No.[6] Not unless the others go too, Maude!

MAUDE.

(*very pleasantly, rises*) Very well, Julian, I'm ready to do anything! Pour out anybody's tea, kiss anybody's baby, anything to advance the political education of the nation! Let's all go! It will be rather jolly! Come along! Now, Mary! (*Takes* MARY'S *arm.* MARY *throws a grateful look at* JULIAN *and exit with* MAUDE.)[7]

MRS C.[8]

Really, Julian, if you hadn't been leaving us to-day for ever so long, I should be very angry with you! (*Exeunt* MRS. C. *and* LADY UMFRAVILLE.)[9]

(CHANDLER *is meantime conferring with* DANEPER *and* TODD. SIR SETON *is occupied with paper.*)

[1] C.

[2] *Comes down to back of settee.*

[3] *Goes up stage. Chan. goes up stage to* R. *of* C. *opening and crosses to Dan. and Todd.* L.

[4] *Going up* C.

[5] R.

[6] *Mary stops.*

[7] *At back* C. *to* L. *Felicia rises, comes to back of settee. Chandler is with Todd.*

[8] *Crosses to* C.

[9] *Back* C. *to* L.

FEL.

Won't you come with us, Julian? (*Going up and looking back.*)

JUL.

[1] *Going to her.*

(*indifferently*) Yes—if you like.[1]

FEL.

You're not a very amiable lover, considering I'm going to lose you for months, perhaps years, and that you may get lost or killed in Africa! (*Exeunt* JULIAN *and* FEL.)[2] (*Exeunt* TODD *and* DANEPER.)[3]

[2] *At back C. to L. Todd and Daneper leaves table and get to R. conferring about proofs.*

[3] *R. Chandler comes down to Sir Seton.*

CHAN.

Sir Seton—(SIR SETON *puts down paper.*) it would be of immense advantage to my candidature if you were to—to—a—to—a mix a little with my guests.

[4] *Seated L.*

SIR S.[4]

Should be delighted, Chandler, but leap-frog and skittles are rather out of my way.

CHAN.

A little cordiality, a little friendly intercourse—with such persons as Danks for instance, goes a great way.

[5] *Rises.*

SIR S.[5]

[6] *Crosses to C. and up.*

It does with me.[6]

[7] *Following a little.*

CHAN.[7]

And now Julian and Miss Umfraville are engaged—and you promised—

[8] *C.*

SIR S.[8]

[9] *Turns to Chan.*

(*a little angry, controls himself*)[9] My dear Chandler, let us understand one another. You're rich—I'm poor! I've had to turn out of Tatlow Hall! You've turned into it! I've only one child, and I want to spare her the continual struggle with genteel poverty that her mother and I have gone through. And naturally I want the old place

to be hers. You agree to settle so much upon her the day your son marries her, and I shall use my influence amongst my county friends to get you into Parliament. There our agreement ends,[1] and as for playing skittles with Mr. Danks—excuse my plain speaking—I'll see your election damned first!

CHAN.

(*cordially*) Oh, quite so! Quite so!

(*Exit* SIR SETON.)[2]

CHAN.

(*aside*) If I could only get into Parliament without him![3]

TODD.

Oh, by the way, sir! Have you looked through the proofs of the interview for Saturday's County Herald?

CHAN.[4]

(*pulls proof from pocket*) Yes, here they are. Not up to your usual form, Todd.[5]

TODD.

What's wrong?

CHAN.

I think you might make a great deal more of my philanthropy. You've said nothing about my building the new congregational chapel at Little Hoggesdon.

TODD.[6]

Yes, but now you've joined the Church—

CHAN.

I take a very broad view of these matters. You might mention that!

TODD.

(*taking notes*) Very well. Profoundly sincere religious convictions, but no narrow bigotry.

[1] *Going* C.

[2] *At back* C. *to* L.

[3] *Stop Music. Chan. goes* L. *of settee* C. *Enter Todd from conservatory* R.

[4] *In front of settee.*

[5] *Sits* C.

[6] R.

CHAN.

That's it. By the way, about that subscription to the Wesleyan Sunday Schools—I should think a ten pound note, eh?

TODD.

You gave twenty to the Baptists. All the fat will be in the fire if you don't treat 'em both alike.

CHAN.

Very well, twenty then. I wish there weren't quite so many sects. It gives one a very poor opinion of religion.

TODD.

When you've got to subscribe to them all, it does. But you can't get into Parliament without it.

CHAN.

(*running over proofs*) "Great business energy." That's all right! "Paternal care of work people, not a man, woman or child in the Tatlow Porcelain works who wouldn't gladly lay down his life for Joseph Chandler." That's very good indeed, Todd —"Most affectionate husband and father—sacred shrine of domestic happiness—"

TODD.

That always goes down with the British public.

CHAN.

Just so. (*Reads.*) "Under his fostering care, the Tatlow Porcelain works have grown from a mere hovel to cover two acres of ground and to afford employment for five hundred hands. The discovery some twenty years ago of a peculiar process of glazing by an ingenious workman named Cyrus Blenkarn—" (*Stops, annoyed.*) What's the object in mentioning Blenkarn's name?

TODD.

Well, as the fact of his invention is so well known—

CHAN.

Well known! Of course, it's well known, so what's the good of mentioning it? Where would his invention have been if it hadn't been for my capital and business energy in working it? Besides, I paid him for it, two hundred pounds. And look how good I've been to him every since—always advanced him money on his wages to fool away on his crack-brained inventions that never came to anything. No! It's not necessary to mention Blenkarn.[1] He shares in the glory of belonging to the works. That ought to be enough for him.[2]

(JULIAN *enters.*)[3]

TODD.

Very well, I'll alter that paragraph. (*To* DANEPER, *who enters.*)[4] All right,, Daneper!

TODD.[5]

I'll bring round the proofs to-night.[6] By the way Daneper,[7] I could give you a few notes about Captain Chandler. They might be of use to your editor. (*To* CHAN.) Eh, Sir?

CHAN.

Certainly.[8]

(DANEPER *comes to* TODD,[9] *takes note-book and pencil.* JULIAN *listens with growing anger.*)

TODD.

(*dictating*) Our local hero, Captain Chandler, having covered himself with glory in the last Egyptian campaign, is again about to visit Africa. He has nobly volunteered to accompany the relief expedition in search of the renowned African traveller, Sir George Hinchinbrook. The deadly perils of the Central African desert—

JUL.[10]

Stop that confounded flummery, Todd. I'll give

(*Call s*). *Maude, Felicia, Lady U., Mrs. C., Cyrus.*

[1] *Rises.*

[2] *Crosses to* L. *and sits at writing table.*

[3] *From back, comes* L. C.

[4] *From conservatory* R. *Daneper comes into drawing-room* R. *of Todd.*

[5] R.

[6] *Daneper is going towards* L. C. *table.*

[7] *Seeing Julian.*

[8] *Goes* L. *to chair and sits.*

[9] *Corner of settee.*

[10] *Comes down* C. *to Daneper and Todd.*

you the particulars myself.[1] (*Dictating.*) Captain Julian Chandler, having got himself into a devil of a mess at College and in the Service and being dunned by all the Jews in Christendom,[2] has been obliged to accept his father's offer to pay off his debts on condition of his settling down and becoming respectable—

CHAN.[3]

(*interrupting*) Julian! This is scandalous!

JUL. (*taking no notice of* CHANDLER.)

But not wishing to tie himself up at present, he was jolly glad to get the chance to cut away to Africa.

CHAN.

(*fuming*) Julian![4]

JUL.

The Tatlow brass band accompanied Captain Chandler to the railway station, and played a selection of the liveliest airs, to testify their delight at the prospect of there being one blackguard the less in the county. Put that down, Daneper, and let them know the truth about me! (*Exit.*)[5]

CHAN.

(*upset, fuming*) Really, this is monstrous! I never heard—[6]

TODD.[7]

Never mind, sir. I'll put that all right. (*To* DANEPER.) That's all right, Daneper. Tell Mr. Snoad I'll call at the office by-and-bye and bring him all particulars myself.

DAN.[8]

Very well, sir, good-day. Good-day, Mr. Chandler. (*Takes up notes from table, puts them in pocket and exit.*)[9]

[1] *Dan. turns to Jul.*

[2] *Todd goes up* R. *to* L. C. *at back.*

[3] L.

[4] *Rising.*

[5] *Crosses in front of settee and exit* R. *and through conservatory.*

[6] *Crosses to* R. *following Jul. Daneper crosses to table* L.

[7] *Comes down* L. C.

[8] L.

[9] *At window.*

TODD.[1]

(*soothing* CHAN.) Don't trouble, sir. I'll see the Herald has it corrected.[2]

CHAN.

Thank you, Todd. You think my speech made a good impression?[3]

TODD.

Excellent! Magnificent! Wonderful!

CHAN.[4]

(*seizes* TODD'S *hand, wrings it effusively*) I never met a man with a stronger natural judgment than yours, Todd! You never mind telling me the truth candidly and fearlessly!

TODD.

Why not? What object is there in telling lies? By the way, sir, when you get into Parliament, you will allow me to help you in your Parliamentary duties?

CHAN.

Naturally, Todd, naturally. Statistics always bother me, Todd. Now you're very good at statistics.

TODD.

Don't you trouble about statistics. You let me know what you want to prove, and I'll guarantee the statistics shall be all right.

CHAN.

Thank you, Todd.

TODD.

And I suppose I shall continue the management of the Tatlow works as well.

CHAN.

Of course, Todd.[5] Of course.[6]

TODD.

And perhaps at some future time you will admit me to a partnership.[7]

[1] C.

[2] *Anxiously sits* C.

[3] L. C.

[4] *Seated.*

[5] *Rises.*

[6] *Going up* C.

[7] *Following.*

[1] C. turns on Todd.

CHAN.[1]

(*Aghast.*) Partnership, Todd? (*Very much upset.*) Really, you surprise me—just as I had taken you into my confidence in everything. It's too bad, Todd. It's encroaching on my good nature! You have the honour of belonging to the works. You share in the glory that attaches to the name of Joseph Chandler. I think that ought to be sufficient.

TODD.

(*humbly*) Very well, sir. I'll say no more.

CHAN.

No, don't, there's a good fellow. Go and see that everybody's attended to. I shall be out amongst them soon. (*Exit.*)[2]

[2] C. and L.

TODD.

Ah, that's gratitude, that is! Where would Joseph Chandler have been if Batty Todd hadn't worked him? (*Exit.*)[3]

[3] *At window* L.

Music. No. 2.

[4] *At back* C. *and* L. *from garden.*

(*Re-enter* CHANDLER, MAUDE *and* FELICIA.)[4]

[5] *Coming down* C.

CHAN.

(*brisk, oily, polite, to* FEL.)[5] Well, how are all our friends enjoying themselves?

[6] *At back of settee.*

MAUDE.[6]

All the old people have gravitated to tea, and all the young to kiss-in-the-ring![7]

[7] *Goes to door of conservatory.* (*Call 3*). *Todd. Nancy* (*Comb*).

CHAN.

Well, so long as they are satisfied.[8]

[8] *Coming down* L. C.

FEL.

Don't you think kiss-in-the-ring is somewhat *too* satisfying? I speak from observation, not from experience.[9]

[9] *Sitting* C.

CHAN.

Oh, quite so! Quite so![10]

[10] C.

[11] *At back* C. *and* L. *from garden.*

(*Enter*[11] LADY UMFRAVILLE *and* MRS. CHANDLER.)

LADY U.

Well, I'm disappointed! It seems this wonderful man is not here![1]

[1] *Coming down* L.

CHAN.

What wonderful man?[2]

[2] L. C. *Mrs. Chan. joins Fel.* C. *and sits* R. *on settee.*

LADY U.[3]

[3] L. *of Chan.*

This workman of yours who made that lovely dinner service you gave us!

CHAN.[4]

[4] C.

[(*contemptuously*) Oh, Blenkarn!

LADY U.

Yes, I must see him! I'm sure he's quite a genius, and I'm so fond of genius! I adore genius![5]

[5] *Sits* L.

CHAN.[6]

[6] L. C.

(*nettled*) Genius! I don't call a mere inventor a genius, Lady Umfraville!

LADY U.

No? What's your idea of a genius then, Mr. Chandler?

CHAN.[7]

[7] L. C.

My idea of a genius is—a—ah—a—practical man, a man who doesn't invent anything himself, but has the insight, and courage, and shrewdness to see the value of another man's invention, and the energy to secure it and work it: a man who, by sheer force of business enterprise, raises himself to the position of a great public benefactor and provides labour for thousands of his fellow creatures. (*Getting eloquent.*) That's the type of genius that I admire, and that's the type of genius that suits our modern civilization!

LADY U.

And the only type of genius that seems to flourish in it![8]

[8] *Fel. and Mrs. C. rise and join Maude* R.

FEL.

What's your idea of a genius, Maude?

[1] *At doorway* R.

MAUDE.[1]

I never saw one! I shouldn't know one if I did!

[2] *At back* C. *from* R.

(*Enter* CYRUS BLENKARN,[2] *in shirt sleeves, with no coat; hair long and untidy: a keen, pale, thin man, with bent form, sharp features, restless, absent, distracted manner: he stands a moment or two at doorway, looking for someone. Seeing* CHANDLER, *he comes eagerly down to him.*)

CYRUS.

[3] C.

Mr. Chandler, could you give me an order for the iron fittings for my new kiln?[3]

CHAN.

[4] L. C.

Really, Blenkarn, this is very unceremonious![4] How do you expect people to trust you when you are always throwing your money away in useless experiments? How much will the fittings come to?

CYRUS.

I'm afraid they'll come to nearly twenty pounds, sir.

CHAN.

Can't you manage with ten?

CYRUS.

I'll try to make it do, if you'll leave the order open.

CHAN.

[5] *Turning to Lady* U.

No, no. Todd will give you an order for fifteen to-morrow.[5]

CYRUS.

But I want to start to-day. I can't afford to waste any more time. I've wasted so many years already. Can't I have it to-day?

CHAN.

My dear good man, you can surely wait till to-

morrow before you begin to squander my money.[1]

LADY U.[2]

Ah, Mr. Blenkarn! That lovely dinner service Mr. Chandler gave us was your workmanship, wasn't it? (CYRUS *assents.*) I'm glad you put your own mark on it![3]

CHAN.[4]

(*shows annoyance*) Ah—ra—Blenkarn—ah—ra[5] I think that's rather an absurd practice of yours, putting your own private mark on your best pieces. It's not necessary—not necessary—I wouldn't do it again if I were you!

CYRUS.

Very well, sir.[6] (*His face falls; he shows intense disappointment.*)

(TODD *enters.*)[7]

TODD.

The balloon's just going up![8]

MAUDE.

Oh, we must see the balloon. Come along everybody.[9] (*To* FELICIA.) Where has Julian got to?[10]

FEL.

I don't know.[11] He can't expect me to be always running after him.

MAUDE.

When I have a lover, I shall expect him to be always running after *me,* and he may think himself lucky if he catches me! (*Exeunt* MAUDE *and* FELICIA.)[12]

CYRUS.[13]

(*catching sight of* TODD) Mr. Todd, could you please let me have an order for some iron fittings?

[1] *Turns up stage to window. Cyrus is going up* C.

[2] *Seated* L.

(*Call'd*).

[3] *Jesse (favour, hat, coat, necktie, ready off* R.) *Mary.*

[4] L.

[5] *Comes down to Cyrus,* L. C.

[6] *Turns up* C. *Stop music.*

[7] *At window* L.

[8] *Todd and Chan. get up* L. *Blenkarn up* C.

[9] *Crosses up* C.

[10] *Maude and Fel. get* C. *Mrs. C. at back of settee.*

[11] *Joins Maude.*

[12] *At window* L. *Mrs. C. joins Lady U. at window* L. *Todd and Chan. have been talking at window* L.

[13] C.

CHAN.

(*interrupting*)[1] Can't you see Mr. Todd is busy upon my parliamentary business to-day? (*Softening.*) Come, go and fetch your coat and enjoy yourself for once. There's a balloon and fireworks, and I daresay I may make another speech. Enjoy yourself, my good man! Enjoy yourself!

[1] *Taking Cyrus away to* R. *Mrs. C. and Lady U. at window to see balloon.*

(*Exit*[2] *followed by* TODD.)

[2] *At window* L.

(CYRUS[3] *stands absorbed, disappointed.*)

[3] R.

(NANCY *appears.*)[4]

[4] *At back* C. *from* R.

NANCY.

May I come in please, Mrs. Chandler?

MRS. C.

Certainly,[5] but you really ought to teach your father to take care of himself.[6] Make him a little more presentable, if he's going to stay. (*Aside to* LADY U.) Mr. Chandler allows these Blenkarns to take the strangest liberties. (*Exeunt* MRS. C. *and* LADY *U.*)[7]

[5] *Advancing a little to* C.

[6] *Lady U. gets to window with Mrs. C.*

[7] *At window* L.

(NANCY *comes down*[8] *to* CYRUS, *who has stood baffled, listless, disappointed, hearing nothing of above conversation,*[9] *she takes him by the shoulders, and shakes him vigorously.*)

[8] R.

[9] *As he is crossing to window* L.

CYRUS.[10]

[10] C.

(*turning*) Eh? Oh, Nancy!

NANCY.

Where's your hat? Where's your coat?

(CYRUS *rouses himself from his abstraction by an effort.*)

CYRUS.

Coat?

NANCY.

Where did you take it off? Think!

CYRUS.

(*thinks. After a pause.*) I don't think I put it on, Nancy.

NANCY.

Where did you wear it last?

CYRUS.

(*after a pause*) I wore it to church last Sunday, Didn't I?

NANCY.

(*with a gesture of despair*) How could you come to Mr. Chandler's in such a state?

CYRUS.

(*innocently*) What state?

NANCY.

Look at yourself. (*Pointing to his clothes.*)

CYRUS.

(*looks himself up and down*) Yes, it does look rather shabby,—but—it isn't Sunday to-day, you know.

NANCY.

You told me you weren't coming to the garden party.

CYRUS.

I haven't come to the garden party. I came to get an order on Mr. Woolaston. (*Suddenly starting off.*) I wonder if Mr. Woolaston—[1]

[1] *Going L.*

NANCY.

Listen![2] Now you are here, you're going to stay and enjoy yourself with me and Mary.

[2] *Catches him by the arm and pulls him back.*

(*At mention of* MARY'S *name,* CYRUS' *face lights up with great animation and joy.*)

CYRUS.

Mary! Where is she? Why don't you bring her to me?

NANCY.

You shall see her directly if you behave yourself. (*Looks all round.*) There's nobody about! Sit down. (*Pushes him into seat.*)[1] Let me make you tidy!

[1] c.

(*She*[2] *takes out small brush and comb from pocket.*)

[2] Goes round to back of settee.

NANCY.

(*beginning to comb his hair*) Did you have your dinner?

CYRUS.

Dinner?

NANCY.

Yes, I left it in the oven!

CYRUS.

Did you? Then why didn't you tell me so?

MARY.

I told you so four times and showed it to you baking.

CYRUS.

Did you? Then I suppose I must have had it! Yes, I remember now. I did have it. It was delicious. I'm very fond of Irish stew.

MARY.

Irish stew! Why, it was a veal pie. (*Gives a pull at his hair which makes him jump.*)

CYRUS.

Was it? I thought it was Irish stew!

[3] At window L.

(JESSE PEGG *enters:*[3] *a young workman dressed in his Sunday best, with hair carefully pomatumed into a triangle three inches high in front. Knowing he is intruding, he stands at window a moment or two before he ventures to whisper.*)

JESSE.

Miss Nancy! Miss Nancy!

NANCY.

(*curtly*) Well?

JESSE.

(*comes in, treading very gingerly on carpet*) The balloon's just going up! I've saved you such a splendid place, close to me.[1]

[1] L. C.

NANCY.

How horrid of you!

JESSE.

(*with desperate earnestness*) Do come along.

NANCY.

I can't. If you're not busy you might—

JESSE.

(*eagerly*) Anything! Anything! If it's for *you*.

NANCY.

It isn't for me. It's for him. Run home and look all over the house and all over the works till you find his hat and coat and necktie, and bring them all here. You'll find me somewhere about when you come back. See how quick you can be.

JESSE.

All right, I'm off.[2]

[2] *Going up C.*

NANCY.

Oh, Mr. Pegg (JESSE *stops.*)[3] You'll find a veal pie in the oven! I wish you'd take it out!

[3] C.

JESSE.

For *you!* If it's for you?

NANCY.

Certainly. It's for my supper to-night, if it isn't burnt to a cinder.

JESSE.

Thank you! Thank you! I'm so proud to be allowed to run on your errands. (*Runs off.*)[4]

[4] *At back C. to R.*

NANCY.

(*aside*) To think that little me should make such a fool of such a sensible fellow as Jesse Pegg.[1]

[1] *Cyrus is leaning forward absorbed in thought. Nancy takes him by the shoulders, pulls him back in his seat and begins combing his hair.*

CYRUS.

If they could make that china a hundred and twenty years ago, why can't it be made to-day, Nancy?

NANCY.

Hold your head still!

CYRUS.

(*getting excited*) You believe it's to be done, don't you?

NANCY.

Yes, if you only keep quiet.

CYRUS.

I'm sure of it! (*Getting excited, wagging his head to and fro.*) All the old receipts are wrong—I've tried them all. I tell you this, Nancy—(*Starts up violently.* NANCY *has hold of his hair.*)

NANCY.

Will you sit down? (*Puts him into settee again.*)

CYRUS.

(*sits down submissively*) Shall you be long, Nancy?

NANCY.

Two minutes if you keep still. Half an hour if you don't.

CYRUS.

(*Schooling himself, sits very quiet for two or three seconds, then plaintively.*) It's very kind of you, Nancy, but you comb my hair too much. You do nothing all day long but comb and make me tidy!

NANCY.

That's the reason you're such a dandy![2]

[2] *At R. corner of settee.*

(*Enter* MARY.)[1]

MARY.

(*comes down very gently*) Father! (*Going to him.*)[2]

CYRUS.

(*his manner changes to intense delight*) Mary, my dear! I haven't seen you for nearly a fortnight. You're quite well, my dear? (*Kisses her.*)[3]

MARY.

Yes, quite well.

CYRUS.

(*looking anxiously at her*) You're looking pale and worried, eh, Nancy?

MARY.

No, no, it's nothing! I'm quite well! Let's talk about yourself. Tell me how you're getting on with your work. How have the new vases turned out?

CYRUS.

Spoilt! They wouldn't stand the firing!

MARY.

Never mind. Every failure brings you nearer to success.

CYRUS.

(*very much touched, gently takes her hand and covers it with kisses*) God bless my Mary! You're always kind to me! There's nobody in the world understands me but you, dear! (*Kissing her hand.* MARY *withdraws it with a pained expression.*)

(JESSE PEGG *enters*[4] *with* CYRUS'S *coat, hat, necktie. He is panting, breathless, exhausted, sits in chair,*[5] *holds out coat, etc., helplessly to* NANCY, *sits panting.*)[6]

NANCY.

What's the matter?[7]

[1] *At window* L.

[2] L. *of settee.*

[3] *Still seated.*

[4] *At back* C. *from* R.

[5] L.

[6] *Chair down* L.

[7] *Crossing behind settee to* [illegible], L. C.

JESSE.

(*hand on heart, breathless*) I've brought—hat—coat—all—(*drops the things helplessly into her hands. She takes them.*)

NANCY.

(*Call 5*). *Julian* (*Bank notes*). What made you run so fast?

JESSE.

(*with a look of reproach*) You commanded me—to make haste.

[1] *Mary fastens Cyrus' wristband.*

NANCY.[1]

I didn't tell you to bring on an apopletic fit! Here, Mary! (*Giving clothes to Mary, who takes them.*) Make haste! (*Looking out of window.*) They're all watching the balloon—you'll have time to finish him before they come back.

[2] *Gets round to* R. *of Cyrus.*

(MARY *takes things,*[2] *puts them on settee, helps* CYRUS *to rise, ties his necktie, makes him generally comfortable and tidy.*)

(JESSE *has sat panting, slowly recovering.*)

NANCY.[3]

[3] *Returns to him.*

Oh, you stupid!

JESSE.

[4] *Rising.*

I did it for you, and you reproach me![4] I wish I was dead.

NANCY.

[5] *Goes to window* L.

Well, don't run yourself to death on my errands. Make it a case of felo-de-se.[5]

JESSE.

[6] L. C.

(*looks at her ferociously for a moment, then goes determinedly to* CYRUS,[6] *holds out his hand*) Good-bye, Mr. Blenkarn!

CYRUS.

(*surprised*) Good-bye, Jesse?

JESSE.

I can't endure it any longer. Her scorn drives me mad. Good-bye.

CYRUS.

But I can't spare you, Jesse. You're the best workman I ever had. Where are you going?[1]

[1] *Nancy leans over back of chair* L.

JESSE.

I don't know whether I shall commit suicide or go to Australia. (*Affected.*) You'll think of me sometimes, Mr. Blenkarn—and there's that bit of Brussels carpet I bought for her—you can keep that—and if anything does happen to me—let her look at that carpet, and remember that Jesse Pegg would have used his heart's best blood to dye its crimson pattern if she had only asked him! Good-bye.[2]

[2] *Going up* C.

NANCY.[3]

[3] L.

(*calling him*) Mr. Pegg! (JESSE *stops.*) If it wouldn't trouble you, I should like to see the sack race.[4]

[4] *Goes up a little to corner of table.*

JESSE.

Trouble! Trouble! (*Coming down to her.*) I'll get you a place. Where would you like to sit? (*Snatching at her hand.*)

NANCY.

In some place where you can't possibly get a chance of squeezing my hand. (*Drags her hand away and runs off.*[5] JESSE *follows.*)[6]

[5] *At window* L.

[6] *Cyrus sits on settee* C. *Mary kneels on his* R.

MARY.[7]

[7] R. C.

(*having finished toilet operations, fondling him*) Father, wouldn't you like me to come back home and live with you always?

CYRUS.

Of course I should, for my own sake—but we must think of your future!

MARY.

My future! (*With a look of shame and pain which* CYRUS *does not see.*)

CYRUS.

Yes, dear![1] You see I'm a careless, thoughtless old fellow, and all the money I get goes somewhere. I don't know where it goes, but it does go somewhere, doesn't it?

[1] *Arm round her neck.*

MARY.

(*caressing him*) Dear father, I'm glad you don't like money.

CYRUS.

Oh, but I do like it! I'm very fond of it! I should like to be very rich; then I could carry on all my experiments: but I'm afraid I shall always be poor.

MARY.

Never mind. God can't think much of money, Look at the people he gives a lot to!

CYRUS.

(*musing*) It doesn't matter for myself and Nancy —we shall always be able to shift for ourselves, but —you're not like us. A h,you don't know how proud I am of you, dear! And you're in your right place here amongst great people! I want you to stay here always! I want to think when I'm at home, "Mary's safe—whatever happens to me, she's provided for! She's a lady, and some day perhaps some great man will see her and fall in love with her."

(*Call 6*). *Chandler.*

MARY.

No, no, father! There's no fear of that!

CYRUS.

Eh?

MARY.

I mean—you're a very foolish old fellow to put such fancies into my head! You mustn't be proud of me any more—never any more,[2]—you'll break my heart.

[2] *Rise and get to it.*

CYRUS.

Why, Mary my dear, what's this?

MARY.

I mean you'll make me vain. Don't talk any more about me. Tell me about your work.[1] How are you getting on with your new kiln?[2]

(JULIAN *enters.*)[3]

CYRUS.

Stopped! I wanted to work at it to-day, but Mr. Todd was too busy to let me have the order for the fittings, and I've got no money to buy them!

JULIAN.

(*coming down*)[4] How much do you want, Mr. Blenkarn?

CYRUS.

Oh, Captain Chandler, sir. How do you do, sir?[5]

JULIAN.

How much do you want?

CYRUS.

For the fittings, sir? I'm afraid they'll come to nearly twenty pounds.[6]

MARY.[7]

No—Captain Chandler—please not—it wouldn't be right for my father to take money from you!

JULIAN.

Why not? All our money came from your father's invention. We owe him more than we shall ever pay him! Here, Mr. Blenkarn. (*Giving notes.*)

CYRUS.

Thank you! Thank you![8]

JULIAN.

Don't thank me! I wish I could make it more, but I'm not very flush myself—[9]

[1] *Comes to him.*
[2] *Sits on settee on his* R.
[3] C. *from* R.
Music No. 3 Schottische.
[4] L. C.
[5] *Rises, takes hat from settee as he does so. Mary rises. She has shown slight confusion and alarm at Julian's voice.*
[6] *Julian takes out notecase.*
[7] R.
[8] *Takes them, shows them to Mary.*
[9] *Goes a little to* L.

CYRUS.

[1] *Offering it back to Julian.*

Then I ought not to take this—[1]

JULIAN.

Yes—yes—take it. You ought to be at the head of the firm, instead of working for us. Besides, I shall get plenty out of the governor before I start.

CYRUS.

[2] *Thrust notes in side pocket of coat.*

Oh, well, then you'll excuse me[2]—I'm so much obliged, so much obliged.[3]

[3] *Is going off* C.

MARY.

[4] R. C.

Father, where are you going?[4]

CYRUS.

To Mr. Woolaston's to buy the fittings. Good-bye, dear.[5]

[5] *Going.*

MARY.

But Mr. Woolaston is here at the garden party. He has shut up his shop for to-day. (*Going up to him.*)

CYRUS.

[6] *Crosses to* L. *Taking money from pocket again.*

Has he? Then he must open it again. I can't have my kiln stopped for a garden party.[6] Thank you, Captain Chandler—it's so kind of you, so kind. You'll excuse me. I must go—I want to get these fittings. Thank you! Thank you! So kind! (*Shakes hands with* JULIAN.)[7] (*Exit.*)

[7] *Going off at window* L. *with great animation.*

MARY.[8]

[8] C.

You shouldn't have given him that money!

JULIAN.

Why not?

MARY.

Can't you see—it seems like—(*Stops ashamed.*) Julian, how can I ask you? You must marry Miss Umfraville?

JULIAN.

Marry her? No! I mean to get out of it some way

or the other![1] I hope to heaven I shall get my quietus out in Africa, and there'll be an end of me!

MARY.

Hush! You mustn't talk like this.[2]

JULIAN.

How should I talk? I've acted like a blackguard and a scoundrel. And you've been such a brick to me, Mary, as staunch as steel, as true as gold! What must you think of me?

MARY.

I forgive you, Julian!

JULIAN.

Don't forgive me! Hate me and despise me! I hate and despise myself!

MARY.

No—no—, Julian, you love me still.[3]

JULIAN.

Love you! You know I do! You know I'd marry you tomorrow if I dared.

MARY.

If you dared.

JULIAN.

How can I? With nothing but beggary to offer you. And to take you out to that cursed climate to die with me. No! I've brought enough misery on you—I won't wrong you any more.

MARY.

Oh, Julian,[4] what can I do? What can I do?

JULIAN.

Stay here, Mary. If I live and come back to England, (*enter* CHANDLER)[5] you shall be my wife. If I die, as I hope I may—well! I shall know you are safe and happy. Maude's fond of you, and you will always have a home here. If there's one thing

[1] *Crosses to R. then back to C. and sits C.*

[2] *On his L.*

[3] *Embrace.*

[4] *Goes L.*

[5] *At back C. from L.*

(*Call 7*).
Cyrus.
Todd.
Sir Seton.
Dutton (hat and coat).
Servant.
Mrs. C.
Felicia (flower).
Maude.
Lady U.

I'm thankful for, it is that your secret will never be known.

[1] L. C.

MARY.[1]

[2] *Drops her eyes.*

Julian, (*looks at him*) it must be known.[2]

JULIAN.

(*shows surprise and fear, then bursts out—rises*) Oh, what a scoundrel I've been! What a coward and a fool I was to let my father gull me into this marriage. (*With great tenderness, going to her, puts his arms round her.*) Mary!

[3] *C. to back of couch.*

(CHANDLER *comes forward.*[3] *They both show surprise and consternation, and fall apart.* MARY *shows intense shame.*)

CHAN.

[4] *C. looks from one to the other.*

[4] Miss Blenkarn, Mrs. Chandler is asking for you. (MARY *stands speechless and overwhelmed.*) Do you hear, madam? Mrs. Chandler is waiting.

[5] C. to L.

(MARY *slowly exit.*)[5] (*Turns to* JULIAN, *sternly.*) What's the meaning of this?

JULIAN.

(*summoning courage*) It means I've been a blackguard![6]

[6] R.

CHAN.

What! You don't mean to say there's any chance of a public scandal?[7]

[7] R. C.

JULIAN.

No, there shall be no public scandal if I can stop it!

CHAN.

Stop it! You must stop it! You know what these Tatlow people are. If this affair gets wind, it will lose me hundreds of votes.[8] Come now, what do you mean to do?

[8] *Stop music.*

JULIAN.

(*calmly*) I mean to marry Miss Blenkarn.

CHAN.

What!

JULIAN.

Look here, sir, I've been a fool. Don't force me to be a coward as well!

CHAN.

I shall force you to keep your word to Miss Umfraville.

JULIAN.

You will?

CHAN.

I shall. Sir Seton's influence is necessary to me. If you break off your engagement with his daughter, he will withdraw his support.

JULIAN.

But, father—

CHAN.

I shall not argue the point with you, Julian. Come, the time's short. What do you say?

JULIAN.[1]

[1] R. *firmly.*

I shall marry Miss Blenkarn.

CHAN.[2]

[2] C.

Very well, sir. Then I shall not pay a farthing of your debts, I shall publicly disown you for my son and when you leave this house to-day, you'll never return. Do you hear, sir? So pack up, and be gone. (*Rings bell.*)[3]

[3] *up* L. *above window.*

JULIAN.

Very well.

CHAN.

And when you and your precious madam are starving toegther,[4] you'll think what a fool you were not to accept my offer of a comfortable provision for her! (CYRUS *enters.*)[5]

[4] *Going to him* R.

[5] *Cyrus enters out of breath,* L.

JULIAN.

(*seeing* CYRUS) Hush!

Band and shouts ready.

CYRUS.

I can't find Mr. Woolaston anywhere. Have you seen him, sir?

CHAN.

No, Blenkarn, no.

CYRUS.

[1] *Cyrus goes up L. C. and leans on chair for a moment, then up C. opening looking for Woolaston.*

They told me he had gone into the house too.[1]

CHAN.

(*to* JULIAN) You'd better think it over, young man —(*Softening, drawing* JULIAN *down stage.*) Come, Julian, I don't want to be hard on you for this bit of boyish folly. But be reasonable. You must see that if you split with the Umfravilles just now, it will ruin all my hopes, destroy my honourable ambition.

JULIAN.

[2] *C. and R. as if he had seen some one.*

(*indicating* CYRUS) But his hopes—*his* ambition for Mary—her life, poor girl! (*Exit* CYRUS.)[2]

CHAN.

I'll take every care of her, I promise you. Don't break your engagement now, Julian. I wouldn't mind it in a year's time, when once I'm safe in Parliament. Come, you'll let things stay as they are.

JULIAN.

[3] *Excited and raising voice.*

I can't—it's cowardly—it's blackguardly![3]

[4] *C. and R.*

(CYRUS *re-enters.*)[4]

CHAN.

Hush! (*Looks round.*) Then you'll marry her and bring her to beggary. Mind, I'm determined.

JULIAN.

(*after a pause*) If I do nothing to break with the Umfravilles for a year, will you pay off my debts and give me the two thousand you promised?

CHAN.

Certainly, I will. I—

CYRUS.

(*comes down*)[0] Mr. Chandler, would you let one of the men—

[0] C.

CHAN.[1]

[1] R. C.

(*irritated*) What is it, Blenkarn, what is it? (*Takes him to window.*)[2]

[2] L.

CYRUS.

Why, it's Woolaston—

CHAN. (*impatiently.*)

Yes, yes, anything you please! Send one of the men—

CYRUS.

Thank you, sir. (*Going off.*)[3] Here Tom, Mr. Chandler says—(*Voice dies away.*)

[3] *As he exit at* L. *window.*

CHAN.

(*to* JULIAN) Well? Yes or no? (*Servant enters.*)[4]

[4] C. *from* R.

JULIAN.[5]

[5] R.

We'll let things stay as they are.

CHAN.

A very sensible decision. (*Shakes hands.*)

(*Enter* TODD,[6] MARY *appears at back.*)[7]

[6] *Window* L.
[7] C. *from* L.

SERVANT.

You rang, sir?[8]

[8] *Down* C.

CHAN.[9]

[9] R. C.

Yes, let Mrs. Chandler and the family know that Captain Chandler has received an urgent telegram from London.—He will leave by the five o'clock up express, instead of the night mail.

JULIAN.

What?

CHAN.

(*to servant*) Tell Williams to have everything ready. (*Exit* SERVANT.)[1]

[1] *Through window* L.

JULIAN.

There is no need for me to leave before the mail.

CHAN.

(*after a look at* MARY, *determinedly*) I think there is.

TODD.

What's this? Captain Chandler, going at once? I must wake up the brass band and get some men to take your horses out of the carriage and draw you to the station, eh, sir?

CHAN.

[2] *Going to back to settee.*
[3] *Hurriedly at window* L.
[4] *From window.*

By all means! By all means![2] (TODD *exit.*)[3]

(*Enter*[4] MAUDE, MRS. CHANDLER, FELICIA, LADY UMFRAVILLE *and* SIR SETON.)

MAUDE.

(*to Julian*) Julian, is this true? Are you obliged to go this afternoon?

MRS. C.

(*to* JULIAN) Must you go, Julian?

CHAN.[5]

[5] *Comes down between Lady U. and Felicia.*

Yes, he is urgently required in London to-night. Miss Umfraville, there is only just time to bid him good-bye.

JULIAN.

[6] *Mrs. C. and Maude follow.*
[7] *Crosses to Felicia.*

Our adieux have already been said.[6] Have they not?[7]

FELICIA.

Yes, I suppose so. (*Takes off a flower she has been wearing.*) There's a keepsake for you.

JULIAN.

Good-bye. I'm not good enough for you, Felicia.

(*Re-enter* TODD.)[1]

(JULIAN *embraces* MRS. C. *and then* MAUDE.)

TODD.[2]

(*to crowd outside*) Now then! Three cheers for Captain Chandler! Hip! Hip! Hurrah!

(*Crowd cheer, band strikes up*[3] *in distance, getting nearer and nearer till Curtain.* DUTTON *enters*[4] *with* JULIAN'S *hat, coat, gloves, etc.* CYRUS *enters.*[5] *Talks to* TODD *for a moment, then goes toward* C. *opening, trying as he does so to attract* MARY'S *attention.*)

JULIAN.

Now, Dutton, look sharp![6]

MARY.

(*aside*) Will he go without a word?[7]

(JULIAN *is saying good-bye all round, embraces his mother, sister.*)

JULIAN.

Good-bye Maude! Mother! Felicia![8] Good-bye, Sir Seton. I leave Felicia in your care. If anything happens to me—

CHAN.[9]

(*looking out of window*) The carriage is ready, Julian. You haven't a moment to waste.[10] (DUTTON *exit.*)[11]

JULIAN.

(*to* MARY) Good-bye, Miss Blenkarn. (*Looks round to see if he is unobserved.*[12] *Then* JULIAN *turns to her and says furtively*)—Mary, I—(*Sees* CYRUS, *stops.*)

[1] *At window* L. *Sir S. drops down* L.

[2] *At window.*

Cheers and band.

[3] *No. 4. (March).*

[4] R.

[5] L., *crosses behind to* R.

[6] *Dutton hands him hat, etc.*

[7] C.

[8] *Crosses to Sir S. All follow.*

[9] L. C.

[10] *Mary gets down* R.

[11] *At conservatory* R.

[12] *Cyrus comes down* R. C.

MARY.

(*nerves herself with great fortitude*) Good-bye, Captain Chandler! I hope you will—I—I—I— (*Breaks down, almost fainting, her father catches her in his arms.*)

[1] R. C.

CYRUS.[1]

Mary, what is it? Mary—

JULIAN.

Miss Blenkarn!

[2] Comes from window to C.

CHAN.[2]

(*touches him on the shoulder*) Come, sir, come! Time presses!

JULIAN.

But Miss Blenkarn is ill—

CYRUS.

Yes, she's—

MARY.

(*with desperate effort recovers herself*) No—no—I'm quite well. (*In a firm, determined, cheerful voice*) I hope you will have a pleasant journey, Captain Chandler. Good-bye. (*Stands calm and motionless throughout, betrays no emotion.*)

JULIAN.

[3] Offers hand to Cyrus.

Good-bye. Good-bye, Mr. Blenkarn.[3]

CYRUS.

[4] Grasping his hand.

1st Picture. Julian gone. All looking off at window. Ladies waving handkerchiefs, with the exception of Mary who is standing in conservatory door, weeping.

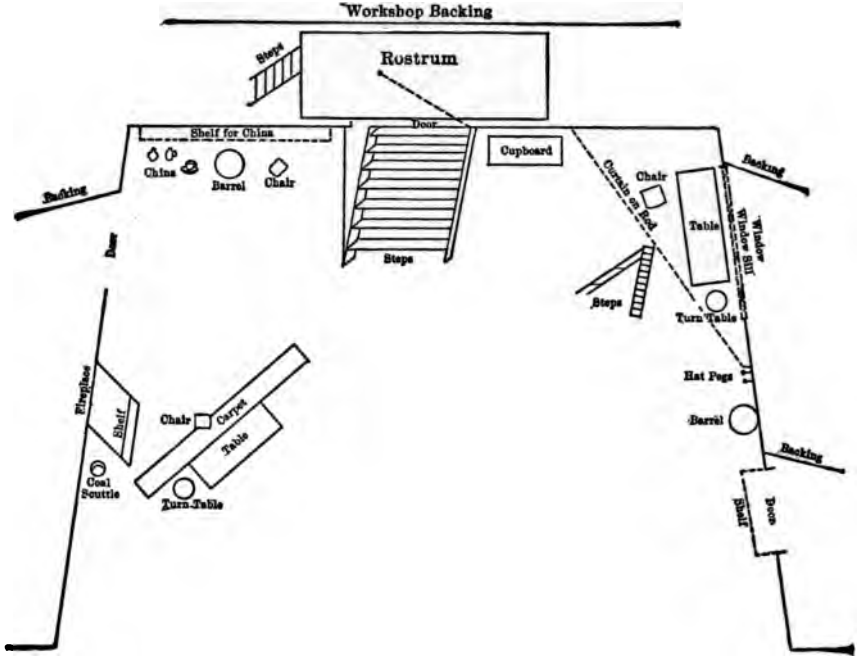
Time 3¼ minutes.

Good-bye, Captain Chandler![4] Good-bye. Thank you! Thank you! I shall get to work to-night! Your kind present! God bless you! God bless you!

(*He wrings* JULIAN'S *hand.* JULIAN *hastily withdraws it and rushes off. Band very loud.*)

CURTAIN.

THE MIDDLEMAN
ACT II.



ACT II.

SCENE.—CYRUS BLENKARN'S *house, as in plan. A plain sparely-furnished room, with cheap wainscoting and whitewashed walls. A fireplace down stage right: a door up stage right. At back, corded to the wall, are a pair of steps which can be let down from* CYRUS' *workshop so as to furnish access to its door, which is some six or seven feet from the stage in the back wall. To the right of these steps on the wall at back are shelves with various specimens of china and earthenware. To the left of the steps a cupboard. Across the corner at left is hung on rod a chintz curtain, which being drawn aside discloses a bench with materials for painting china and a chair in front of the bench. A window over the bench: a pair of high steps just below the chintz curtain,*[1] *a door down stage left. In front of the fireplace a long table with materials for painting china. Behind the table a chair in the centre of a strip of new, gaudy, crimson-flowered, Brussels carpet. Discovers* NANCY *on top of steps,*[2] *arranging the curtain over* JESSE'S *bench.* JESSE *is looking on.* NANCY has *just fixed the curtain in such a way as to hide* JESSE'S *bench.*)

Call 1.

Vase on table.

Nancy.
Jesse.
Chandler.
Mrs. C.
Sir Seton.
Lady U.
Maude.
Felicia.

[1] L. C.

[2] L. C

NANCY.

(*on steps*) There! Now when that's drawn you can't possibly see me! (*Coming down steps.* JESSE *offers to assist her.*) Go away, Jesse, go away!

(*She comes down steps folding them up.*[3] JESSE *puts steps against wall.*[4] *Then goes to* NANCY'S *table.*)[5]

[3] R., *Nancy crosses to table* R.

[4] R.

[5] R.

NANCY.

Come! Get to your work! (JESSE *hesitates.*) Get

to your work![0] Fix all your attention on it, and don't so much as remember that I am in the room!

(*He goes reluctantly behind the curtain*[1] *and sits at his table.* NANCY *draws curtain. She goes to her table,*[2] *seats herself at work, takes up vase and begins to paint it.* JESSE *gradually moves the curtain and peeps round it. She takes no notice but goes on painting, holding out the vase at full length to get the effect.*)

JESSE.

Miss Nancy! Miss Nancy!

(NANCY *sublimely unconscious is studying the effect of vase.*)

JESSE.

(*shouts*) Words are cheap enough, aren't they?

NANCY.

It disturbs your peace of mind when I speak to you.

JESSE.

(*drawing curtain back and looking round*) It disturbs my peace of mind a great deal more when you don't speak to me.

NANCY.

Then why do you stay here? Why don't you go into the works?

JESSE.

And leave your father? You know he must have a workman always handy to help him. I will never leave your father. (*Rises.* NANCY *takes no notice.* JESSE *comes determinedly down to her, stands a moment, then shouts fiercely at her.*) I will never leave your father![3]

(NANCY *quietly puts down her vase, takes him by the arm, marches him up to his bench, seats him at it, then in a cold, magisterial voice.*)

[0] *Jesse goes, L. Nancy follows him.*

[1] *Up L.*

[2] *R.*

Call 2.

Nancy. Postman.

[3] *Thumping on the table.*

NANCY.

If I see or hear anything more of you for the rest of the morning, I won't speak to you for a week. (*Goes back to table*[0] *sits.*)

[0] R.

JESSE.

(*meekly*) Thank you. You shan't! I'll be as quiet as a mouse! Thank you so much! Thank you!

(*He gets quietly to work, painting vase on table. Enter* CHANDLER[1] *and* MRS. CHANDLER, *followed by* MAUDE, FELICIA, SIR SETON *and* LADY UMFRAVILLE.)

[1] L.

CHAN.

Good-morning, Nancy.[2] I want to see your father.

[2] *Comes to* C.

NANCY.

(*glancing at ladder*) I'm very sorry, sir. His ladder's up.

CHAN.

Oh nonsense! Nonsense! Blenkarn! Blenkarn![3]

[3] *Goes up* C. *The others cross to Nancy's table.*

JESSE.[4]

Shy something heavy at his door, sir, and if that don't fetch him, I'll go round to the back and break a window. That's almost safe to bring him.

[4] L

(CHANDLER *goes to* CYRUS' *ladder, and bangs*[5] *at it with his walking stick.* CYRUS *opens door an inch.*)

[5] *Three times with increasing vigour.*

CYRUS.

(*through chink of door*) Run away! Run away! Go and do some errands! Go and take a long walk! Don't come back again! (*Slams door.*)

CHAN.

(*loudly*) Blenkarn! Blenkarn! I say—

CYRUS.

(*opening door and looking out*) Eh? Oh! (*Lets down ladder, stands at top of it very much embarrassed.*)

CHAN.

[1] L. C. Come down, Blenkarn, I want to speak to you![1]

CYRUS.

(*coming down ladder*) I'm very sorry, sir—I didn't know it was you, or I shouldn't have told you to go and do some errands![2]

[2] *Comes down to Sir S. and Lady U.*

CHAN.

[3] *As he goes down* L. (*aside*)[3] His girl hasn't told him yet.

CYRUS.

[4] R. (*apologetically to* SIR SETON *and* LADY UMFRAVILLE.)[4] I beg your pardon. I'm obliged to have that ladder, because as soon as I set to work, a lot of people will come bothering me, and I can't get rid of them.[5] I don't like to tell them they're a nuisance. And they always come just as I'm doing something important, don't they, Nancy?

[5] *Nancy frowns and makes signs.*

NANCY.

(*flatly*) No! (*glaring at him.*)

[6] C. CYRUS.[6]

Yes, they do. You know they do.

[7] L. C. CHAN.[7]

Blenkarn, I want you to show Sir Seton and Lady Umfraville over the works. You can explain the processes so much better than anybody else. (CYRUS' *face falls.*)

CYRUS.

Not this morning, Mr. Chandler? I'm very busy this morning.

CHAN.

(*contemptuously*) Busy! My good man! You've been busy these last twenty years, and what have you done?

CYRUS.

(*pause*) Well, I invented the glaze. The works were bankrupt when—

CHAN.

When I bought your patent, and brought my energy and capital to bear on it. Come, Sir Seton and Lady Umfraville are waiting. You've got a lot of odds and ends here. You might begin by showing them your bits of old Tatlow!

CYRUS.

Delighted, I'm sure—(*showing great reluctance, languidly takes a teapot from cupboard, without interest.*) Teapot—date 1750—made by Aaron Shelton—[1] (*with sudden flash of enthusiasm.*) Look at it! The new Tatlow would melt like wax in it. I've baked it for weeks and there isn't a crack in it. If I could only make a piece like that before I die! And I will! I will!

[1] C.

CHAN.[2]

[2] L. C.

Not you, Blenkarn! You'll never do it!

CYRUS.

Oh, yes I will!

CHAN.

By the way, you're always wanting money! You might sell me your collection.

CYRUS.

No, I won't sell that, Mr. Chandler,[3] (*Restores teapot to place, takes out dish.*) Dessert service—1762—made by—by—(*gets bewildered, looks round helplessly*) I can't remember anything this morning—

[3] *Turns up stage.*

SIR S.[4]

[4] R. C.

Chandler, we'll look round the works at some other time when Mr. Blenkarn is at liberty—

(CYRUS *grasps* SIR SETON'S *hand.*)

CYRUS.

(*very warmly*) Thank you! Thank you![5] I'm just at work on the model for my new kiln, and it's

[5] *Chan. goes up stage, L. C.*

Call S.
Maude. Felicia.

very complicated—the fact is there are nineteen different ways of doing it, and I don't know which is right—and if you'll excuse me—[1] Oh, there's Jesse Pegg! He knows the works a great deal better than I do, don't you, Jesse?

[1] *Going towards cupboard* C. *to put down dish, sees Jesse at work* L.

JESSE.[2]

[2] *Seated* L.

Yes, Mr. Blenkarn, I'm ready.[3]

[3] *Rising.*

SIR. S.

Come along then, Mr. Pegg.[4] We'll say good morning, Mr. Blenkarn! I can see you'll be glad to get rid of us!

[4] *Crosses to* L. C.

Knock ready.

CYRUS.

Yes, I shall. And if you'll come some other day when I'm not busy—in about six months' time—or a year—I'll show you round myself. Jesse, mind you show them everything, and—and—(*bolting hastily up ladder*) Good morning. Good morning. So proud I've seen you, so proud. Good morning! Good morning! (*Draws up ladder and exit into room, closing door.*)

JESSE.

[5] L.

If you'll come this way, please—(*going to door*[5] *and stopping.*) (*Enter* TODD.)[6]

[6] L. *He remains up stage* L. *and signs to Chan.*

MRS. C.

Nancy, you will come with us. My daughter and Miss Umfraville are going through the works, they will require your assistance.

[7] *Ladies cross to door* L.

NANCY.

Very well, Mrs. Chandler.[7] (*Exeunt*[8] MAUDE, FELICIA, MRS. C., LADY U., SIR. S., NANCY *and* JESSE.)

[8] L.

CHAN.[9]

[9] R. C.

What is it, Todd?[9]

TODD.

[10] L. C.

Needham has brought the contract for the new works. He wants it signed at once.[10]

CHAN.

I'm a little doubtful, Todd, about these extensive alterations.[1] It mortgages all my capital for years. Suppose business was to go wrong—

[1] *Puts hat and stick on table* R.

TODD.

You ain't losing faith in yourself?

CHAN.

I shall never lose faith in myself, Todd. But suppose this old fool (*indicating* BLENKARN'S *room*) was to find out the secret of the old Tatlow—

TODD.

Well?

CHAN.

It would knock all our present ware out of the market.

TODD.

He'll never find it out.

CHAN.

No, and if he does, I could buy his patent of him for a five pound note.[2]

[2] *Going to corner of table* R.

TODD.

Yes, to be sure. (*Aside.*)[3] Unless I bought it for ten.

[3] *Going* L. C.

CHAN.

Very well, Todd. Then we'll sign the contract and start the works at once.

TODD *going to* CHAN. R. C.

Right. And if business gets a little shaky, you can turn the whole concern into a limited liability company, and clear out.

CHAN.

Oh, quite so, quite so.

(*A knock at door. Enter* POSTMAN[4] *with letter.*)

[4] L. *Chandler* R. C., *Todd* C.

POST.

Good morning, Mr. Chandler.

CHAN.

Good morning, Carter.

[0] *Crosses to table, R.*

POST.[0]

Letter for Mr. Blenkarn. As usual at this house, if there's only the old man at home, you might knock the blessed walls down and none would hear you.

[1] R.
[2] R.

(*Puts letter on table*[1] *near* CHAN., *and exit.*[2] CHAN. *aside, glances at letter, shows alarm and surprise,*[3] *puts his hand over letter.*)

[3] *Chan. turns for hat and stick, sees letter. Todd watching. Chan. turns suddenly, nearly catching Todd, who looks the other way.*

CHAN.

Todd, step across to Needham and tell him I'll be there to sign the contract in five minutes.

TODD.

Yes, sir. (*Watching him, aside.*) What's up, I wonder? There's something in that letter. (*Going off slowly.*[4]

[4] L.

CHAN.

(*peremptorily*) Did you hear?

TODD.

[5] L.

Yes, sir. (*Exit quickly.*)[5]

(*Chandler watches him off, then turns quickly to letter.*)

CHAN.

(*After a look around.*) From Julian! London postmark! What can he have to write to Blenkarn about? Unless it's—(*looking at letter, and looking round*) I suppose it would be considered dishonorable to open a letter—as a rule— and yet in a case of this kind it may be my duty—(*Looks round at* BLENKARN'S *door, opens letter, takes out a slip of paper and an enclosed envelope reads slip of paper.*) "If you love your daughter Mary, be sure she has this privately at once." (*Reads address on enclosed envelope.*) "Miss Mary Blenkarn" (*hesitates*) My public career is at stake. (*opens*

Call L. Todd. Cyrus.

Mary, Come to me at Paris at once at the above address, and I will make you my wife before I leave for Africa. We are hurrying on, so don't delay. If I am obliged to leave Paris before you arrive, I shall leave all instructions for you to follow me. Make the best excuse you can at home. Don't let them suspect you are coming to me. I enclose notes for journey.[1] Oh, my dearest, can you ever forgive me? Ever your Julian." (*Looks round, goes to fire, hesitates for some moments, finally puts letter on fire.*) There, you young fool! I've saved you from the fruits of your folly, and you'll thank me some day! (*Before the letter has burned, enter* MAUDE *and* FELICIA.[2] *They are coughing.* CHAN. *watches the letter burn.*) What's the matter, MAUDE?[3]

[1] *Business of pocketing bank notes.*

[2] L.

[3] *Standing at fire.*

MAUDE.[4]

We've been nearly choked in that horrid tile-room! Oh, Papa![5] Is it necessary for the women and girls to do that terrible work?

[4] *To Chan.*

[5] *Felicia sits down* L. C.

CHAN.

Necessary? Of course it's necessary. What would become of England's commercial prosperity if they didn't do it?

FEL.[6]

It's a wonder they're not all suffocated.

[6] L. C.

CHAN.[7]

Oh, they get used to it. In fact, after a time I believe they really get to like it. They must like it, or they wouldn't love and respect me as they do.

[7] L. *of table* R.

MAUDE.

I suppose, papa, there's no doubt they do love and respect you?

CHAN.

Doubt! You heard the Mayor's speech yesterday? I never heard a more glowing eulogium upon any

man's private and public virtues than he pronounced on mine.

MAUDE.

Yes, but, papa, you get all your wines and spirits from him.

CHAN.

(*Very much upset*) Wines and spirits! Good heavens! That a child of mine should take such an incredibly low view of human nature as to suppose that a respectable wine and spirit merchant should be influenced in his political views by paltry considerations of trade! Get rid of such cynicism, my dear, get rid of it! It's degrading!

Call 5. Jesse. Nancy.

MAUDE.

But you are a splendid customer to him![1]

[1] *Goes to* R. *of Felicia,* L. C.

CHAN.[2]

[2] *Getting to* C.

I encourage all local enterprise. You must surely see, Maude, that I am a great public benefactor to the town of Tatlow. Look at the entertainments yesterday—the fireworks alone—had the man down from the Crystal Palace on purpose. Really it does seem cruel that I should be obliged to point out my benevolence to my own daughter. But I suppose I must bear to be misunderstood, Miss Umfraville, like those other noble philanthropists who have preceded me.

FEL.

Yes, which?[3]

[3] *Seated* L. C.

CHAN.

Well—ah—ra—several. It would be invidious to mention any *one* in particular.

MAUDE.

(*Taking out watch*) Quarter past twelve. (*To* FEL.) Shall we have a gallop before lunch?

FEL.[4]

[4] *Rising and going to door* L.

Yes, and get the dust of that tile-room out of our throats.

MAUDE.

I shall never go there again.[1] Oh, papa, I wish for those poor girls' sakes that England could do with a little less commercial prosperity.

(*Exeunt* MAUDE *and* FELICIA.)[2]

CHAN.[3]

It's strange how little the members of my own family seem to appreciate me. (*Goes to fireplace, stirs ashes with poker.*) Yes, it's quite burnt. Now, if I can persuade the girl to hold her tongue and leave the neighbourhood without saying anything to her father—[4]

(*Enter* TODD.[5]

TODD.[6]

Needham's waiting for you to sign the contract.

CHAN.

I'll go to him.[7] By the way, Todd, you might just draw old Blenkarn, pump him a bit.

TODD.[8]

I will. Rely on me.

CHAN.

We must take care to be on the safe side, Toddy. (*Winks very slowly at* TODD, *who winks very slowly back at him.* CHAN. *laughs.* TODD *laughs.* CHAN. *exit.*[9] *As soon as* CHAN. *has gone off,* TODD *relaxes his wink, lays his finger to the side of his nose.*)

TODD.

Yes, we must take care to keep on the safe side, guv'nor. What luck some men have! What a position I could have made for myself if I had only happened to get hold of a greenhorn like old Blenkarn![10] Ah well, the old boy's just as green as ever! (*Cyrus opens his door and appears at top of ladder. The ladder descends.*) Here is the old moonraker!

[1] *Going towards door. Felicia exits door* L.

[2] *Door* L.

[3] R. C.

[4] *Comes to* C.

[5] L.

[6] *Crosses* L. C.

[7] *Crosses to door* L. *Todd about to follow.*

[8] L. C.

[9] *Door* L.

[10] *Crossing to* R.

(CYRUS *comes down ladder steps, muttering to himself, without noticing* TODD.)

CYRUS.

It won't come right—All my time wasted—

[1] R. TODD.[1]

(*very cordially*) Ah, good morning, Blenkarn! Good morning!

[2] C. CYRUS.[2]

(*waking up*) Good-morning, Mr. Todd. My perforated bricks won't fit—they're all wrong, I must get some more baked.[3]

[3] *Comes to* L. *of table* R.

TODD.

Of course. Tell Cousins to take your order.

CYRUS.

[4] *Going* L. (*gratefully*) Thank you.[4]

TODD.

How are you getting on with your new experiments?

CYRUS.

Splendidly.

TODD.

(*going up ladder*) I should like to have a look at what you're doing.

[5] *Turning and coming* C., *back to audience.* CYRUS.[5]

You can't. I never let anybody go into that room, except my daughter Mary. She's the only one that knows my secrets.

TODD.

(*going up further, hand on door*) Oh, but I might be able to give you some advice, to help you.

CYRUS.

Nobody can help me. (*Fiercely.*) Come down! You shan't go there. Do you hear? Come down, I say!

(TODD *comes quickly down.*)

TODD.

Oh, very well. (*Comes quickly down.*)[0]

(CYRUS *goes up ladder, locks door and puts key in pocket. Re-enter* JESSE *and* NANCY.)[1]

You know, Blenkarn, I take an enormous interest in you.

CYRUS.[2]

Oh, do you?

TODD.

You don't know what a good friend I've been to you!

CYRUS.

(*mechanically*) No—yes—no—I forget.[3]

TODD.

And I mean to stick to you, I do![4] Now, if you make any discovery that means money, why not bring it to me?

CYRUS.

Eh?

TODD.

You can't work it yourself—you've got no capital—well, we work it together and make a fortune out of it. See? Well, that's agreed between us. That's settled.[5]

CYRUS.

No, I don't think so, Mr. Todd.[6]

TODD.

No?

CYRUS.

Mr. Chandler has been a good master to me. He has always advanced me money on my wages to carry on my experiments, and I think I ought to give him the first chance.

[0] *Stands* R. C. *up stage by ladder.*

[1] L., *Jesse takes off coat. Nancy crosses* R. *and seats herself at table* R. *Jesse sits* L. *to work.*

[2] *On steps.*

[3] *Comes down steps. Going* L.

[4] *Takes Cyrus by the arm. They come down* R. C. *together.*

[5] *Seizing and shaking Cyrus's hand.*

[6] *Withdrawing his hand.*

TODD.

(*glibly*) Of course! Of course! I was speaking entirely in Mr. Chandler's interest. Naturally, I should take it to Chandler—great, noble-hearted man, Chandler! Oh, I love him quite as much as you do. (*Aside.*) Damn him, he'll get your invention if I don't look smart.[1] (*Aloud.*) Well then, you bring it to me, and I'll take it to Chandler. (*Exit.*)[2]

[1] *Crosses to door* L.

[2] *Door* L.

CYRUS.

(*after pause, during which he looks blankly round about him*) Now what was I going to do?—Oh, I know.[3]

[3] *Going* L.

JESSE.[4]

Mr. Blenkarn![5]

[4] *Jesse, who has been listening from his seat up stage. Rises, and comes down* L. C.

[5] *Peremptorily stopping him* L. C.

CYRUS.

Yes, Jesse?

JESSE.

I'm going to talk to you for once in a plain, straightforward way!

CYRUS.

No don't, Jesse![6] I'm going to get some bricks perforated.

[6] *Trying to pass him.*

Call 6. Mary. (Watch and chain—letter ready off R.

JESSE.[7]

You'll stay and get your common sense perforated first.

[7] *Stopping him bluntly.*

CYRUS.[8]

Well, what is it, Jesse?[9] Make haste.[10]

[8] C.

[9] *Pause.*

[10] *Takes off spectacles and puts them in his pocket.*

JESSE.

Years ago you invented the glaze which put the Tatlow porcelain works, figuratively speaking, on their legs, put the town of Tatlow, figuratively speaking, on its legs, and put Joseph Chandler Esquire, figuratively speaking, on his legs, and made him, as the Mayor said yesterday, an ornament, a glory and a bulwark to the British nation.

NANCY.[1]

(*shows great interest*) Hear! Hear! Hear!

CYRUS.[2]

Yes, I know, Jesse—but you're wasting my time.

JESSE.

(*fixing him relentlessly*) And what are you to-day? Are *you* a glory, an ornament and a bulwark to the British nation? No! Are *you* putting up for Parliament? No! Are *you* owner of Tatlow Hall? No! Are *you* President of the Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association? No! Have you got a banking account?

CYRUS.

(*laughingly*) A banking account!

JESSE.

No! Have you got a high hat? No! Or a brass knocker? Or a decent coat to your back, or a decent pair of shoes to your feet, or a sixpence to bless yourself with? No! No!! No!!! No!!!!

NANCY.

(*enthusiastically*) Hear! Hear! Hear! Hear!

CYRUS.[3]

I can't help it, Jesse.

JESSE.

You must help it! You shall help it! And it is in the firm belief that you will help it, when you make your next invention, (*waxing more eloquent with* NANCY'S *encouragement*) that I grasp this opportunity of telling you, Mr. Blenkarn, what a fool you've been.

CYRUS.

Thank you, Jesse, I know I've been a fool! I know I ought to have cared more for money![4] But there are thousands of men who can make money—it isn't a very clever trick after all.[5] There isn't a man in

[1] *At her bench.*

[2] *Turns and looks at Nancy surprised, then fidgets to get away.*

[3] *After another look at Nancy.*

[4] *Turning away to R.*

[5] *Seeing vase on Nancy's table.*

the world to-day who could make that vase! What would it matter to *me* if I had all the money in the country so long as I couldn't turn out a bit of work like that! You don't understand me, my lad.[1] Nancy doesn't understand me. My Mary understands me! (*Exit.*)[2]

[1] *Patting Jesse on the shoulder, crosses* L.

[2] L. *door.*

JESSE.

There, Miss Nancy, you told me to speak to the point. Now did I?

NANCY.

You were quite eloquent, Mr. Pegg.

JESSE.

Was I? (*Approaching her fondly.*) If I was eloquent on that subject, what should I be on the subjcet of love?

[3] *Seated at table* R.

NANCY.[3]

Dreadfully tiresome, so please don't begin.

[4] L. *of table* R.

JESSE.[4]

I must. I'm going once and for all to lay bare all the anguish of my heart.

NANCY.

(*unconcerned*) Oh, please don't! Ugh!

JESSE.

[5] *Going to* C.

Aye—laugh at me, jeer at me! trample on me![5]

NANCY.

I don't want to trample on you! I've got your nice Brussels carpet to trample on.

JESSE.

You trample on my gifts!

NANCY.

What did you buy the carpet for?

JESSE.

That its crimson flowers might whisper of my love

to you and be a symbol of its blooming for you—when every shred of that Brussels carpet has melted into oblivion!

NANCY.

Oh, I thought you bought it to keep my feet warm.

(*Rises, takes her chair off the strip of carpet, moves the carpet away from bench throws it away from her to centre of stage.*)

NANCY.

Take your carpet! (*puts her chair back, and sits and goes on with her work.*)[0]

[0] *At table R.*

JESSE.

(*has watched with growing indignation*) You refuse my gift?

NANCY.

I can't take it now I know what the pattern means.

(JESSE[1] *stands savagely looking at her for a few moments, then deliberately sets to work, rolls up the carpet very resolutely.*)

[1] C.

JESSE.

I was not unprepared for this crisis, madam.[2]

[2] *Puts carpet on barrel L.*

(*Goes up to his bench, drags from under it a very large, well-worn, bulgy, carpet bag, with a bit of stocking and a coat arm hanging out of the side.*)

When you flouted me last night, I packed my poor belongings.[3] Cold, heartless serpent! You've withered every spark of good in my nature! Now it matters not what becomes of Jesse Pegg![4]

[3] *Drops bag on stage C.*

[4] *Putting on hat and coat.*

NANCY.

(*unconcerned*) Where are you going, Mr. Pegg?

JESSE.

To ruin, to madness, to despair!

Call 7. Cyrus.

NANCY.

You'll just catch the 1.15 if you make haste.

JESSE.[1]

[1] *Takes up roll of carpet and bag, shoulders the carpet, carries the bag.*

I shall. Some day, basilisk, you may be sorry you didn't accept my Brussels carpet in the spirit in which it was offered.[2] I am going.

[2] *Pausing at door* L.

NANCY.

(*unconcerned, painting her vase—In a very pleasant tone*) Well, Good-bye, if you must go.

JESSE.

I mean it this time. Farewell! I warn you, inhuman, heartless monster, that you have wrecked me body and soul. When anybody asks you, "who murdered Jesse Pegg?" say, "I did." (*With a shriek and a groan rushes tragically off, roll of carpet on shoulder, and dragging the carpet bag after him.*)[3]

[3] L. *door.*

NANCY.

The stupid fellow! And to think that he should be perfectly sane in all other respects! He's gone, I suppose. Well, I can't help it.

[4] L. *door.*

(*Enter* MARY.)[4]

[5] L. C.

MARY.[5]

Nancy, what have you done to Jesse Pegg?

NANCY.

Nothing! He has taken offence and gone off to London, I suppose.

MARY.

For good?

NANCY.

I suppose so. He has really been quite unbearable lately.

MARY.

How?

NANCY.

Unbearably in love with me.

MARY.

Is that so unpardonable, Nancy? Can't you see how he worships you?

NANCY.

I don't want to be worshipped by Jesse Pegg. I don't like common people. What luck you've had, Mary!

MARY.

Have I?

NANCY.

I should like to be in your shoes.

MARY.

Would you?[1]

[1] *Takes off hat.*

NANCY.

Yes, to be living at Tatlow Hall with pleasant, refined people. Of course you deserve it, dear. I don't grudge you. But I should like to be admired by such men as Captain Chandler instead of Jesse Pegg.

MARY.[2]

[2] *Goes to Nancy, puts hat on table R. C.*

Nancy, I'm going to give you a little advice. Jesse Pegg loves you dearly. Handsomeness very soon wears off. Kindness and goodness don't. Perhaps some day Jesse may come back again and ask you to be his wife. If he does, Nancy take him, he's a good honest soul, take him, dear. (*Clasping* NANCY.) And thank God, (NANCY *looks up.*) yes, dear, thank Him with all your heart for giving you a man that can so reverence and worship a woman that he becomes like a fool in her presence. Thank Him that though your lover seems common to you, he loves you so much that you can never become common to him.

NANCY.

Mary! I've never heard you talk like this! What's the matter?

MARY.

Nothing, dear. (*Subdues herself, and becomes quite calm and indifferent for the rest of the scene with* NANCY.)[1] By the way, Nance, you've often longed for a watch—you may as well take mine. (*Taking off watch and chain.*)

[1] *Going to* C.

NANCY.

Oh no, Mary, I couldn't think of it. What will you do yourself?[2]

[2] *Rises, comes to Mary* C. *She has left her handkerchief on table.*

MARY.

I shan't want it. (*Hurriedly.*) There are plenty of clocks at Tatlow Hall. Come, I insist. (*Holding up watch and chain to* NANCY, *who takes them admiringly.*)[3]

[3] *Nancy turns slightly, kisses watch.*

MARY.

There! (*Pause.*) Won't you give me a kiss for it, Nancy? (NANCY *kisses her, then turns away again.*) You don't mind kissing me, do you?

NANCY.

Mind kissing you? !

MARY.

There never were two sisters who loved each other better than you and I do, Nance.

NANCY.

Never! But you didn't come all the way from the Hall to tell me that, did you?

MARY.

No. (*Indifferently.*) I came to have a little gossip with father. Where is he?[4]

[4] *Goes up stage a little.*

NANCY.

Gone to get something for his new kiln. He'll be back directly. (*Looking at watch.*) Twenty minutes to one! Good gracious, I've been forgetting all about dinner! You won't be going yet.[5]

[5] *Going to door* R.

MARY.

Yes, I shall be going soon.[6]

[6] *Following slightly.*

NANCY.

(*carelessly*) Well, good-bye. I shall see you on Sunday as usual! (*Exit.*)[1]

MARY.[2]

You'll never see me again, Nancy. Oh, you are cruel, Julian. To leave me without one word, to let me face this dreadful shame alone! I can't do it! I can't![3]

(*Enter* CYRUS,[4] *very excited, very joyful.*)[5]

CYRUS.

(*as he enters*) That's it ! That's it! Why didn't I think of it before? How stupid of me![6] Mary! Mary, my dear! I'm so glad to see you! (*Kisses her.*) I've just found out the way to build my new kiln! There were nineteen different ways of doing it—all of them wrong—and just as I was coming along, it flashed across me how to do it—yes—it's as good as done. In a fortnight it will be in full work. And then I shall be able to try my new experiment—and, who knows, I may be able to make the old china after all.

MARY.

I'm sure you will.[7]

CYRUS.

And Jesse Pegg has been giving me a good sound scolding. He's very sensible, Jesse Pegg is—sometimes—and he lectured me as I deserved. And what do you think—I'll tell you a secret—I'm not going to be a fool any longer. I'm going to make lots of money for you and Nancy. Tell me, dear, what shall I buy you when I'm rich?[8]

MARY.

What would you like to buy me?

CYRUS.

Everything that's beautiful. A beautiful house, and a horse, and beautiful dresses to wear, silk and em-

[1] *Door* R. U. E.

[2] C.

[3] *Comes down to fireplace.*

[4] L.

[5] *She turns her head a moment.*

[6] *Seeing Mary.*

[7] *Kissing him. Cyrus goes up steps, and unlocks door, then comes down again. Mary goes up stage, gets* L. *of steps.*

[8] *Goes to table, takes large vase from table, and places it on the floor by the side of the steps.*

Call 8. Jesse. Chandler (Purse and money).

broidery and lace and satin, and furs to keep you from the cold, and white soft dresses in summer [1]—all white like your own soul, my Mary—when I'm rich I should like you never to wear anything but white.

[1] *Cyrus sits on steps.*

MARY.

Cyrus should not see Mary's face during this scene.

White—yes, I'll wear white. But what will you buy for yourself, father?

CYRUS.

Never mind about me. I shall spend all my money on you and buy you everything that you deserve. A new home to begin with—

MARY.

A new home—

CYRUS.

Yes, with a corner for me—unless—perhaps some day, Mary, you may want a new home with somebody else.[2]

[2] *Fondling her hand.*

MARY.

No, no, father—

CYRUS.

Don't be too sure, dear—somebody will come and take you from me—and—

MARY.

No, no, it's quite—quite impossible.

CYRUS.

What! You'll stay with me always! How happy we shall be in the future.[3]

[3] *Kissing her hand.*

MARY.

[4] *Kissing his head.*

Yes, how happy we shall be in the future.[4] Father, (*anxiously watching him*) as I was coming from the Hall just now, I saw poor old Mr. Viner standing

at his door. He seems quite aged—quite broken—since—Mary—

CYRUS.

Ah, no wonder! It would have killed me[1] if my daughter—

[1] *Mary winces.*

MARY.

(*quickly*) But she's dead!

CYRUS.

Yes, poor girl! It's a mercy her shame is hidden in the grave.

MARY.

Yes, it's a mercy.

CYRUS.

What a pity she didn't die when she had the fever three years ago—she wouldn't have broken her father's heart then.

MARY.

Yes, death is far better than such disgrace, isn't it? (*Anxiously.*)

CYRUS.

Yes, a thousand times better.[2] There—there, don't speak of it. (*After a thought*) And her name was Mary too.[3]

[2] *Rises, goes to table R. C., takes up vase Nancy has been painting, looks at it.*

[3] *Puts down vase on the table.*

MARY.

Yes, her name was Mary.

CYRUS.

Ah, how different from my Mary![4] (*Seeing that* MARY *is crying,*)[5] Come—come my dear.[6]

[4] *Turning.*

[5] *Goes to her C.*

[6] *Caressing Mary.*

MARY.

(*with apparent indifference*) Well, I must be getting back to the Hall.

CYRUS.

And I must be getting to my work. You know, dear, I love to have a talk with you, but I can't spare the time to-day. Look in to-morrow, will you?

MARY.

No, not to-morrow.

CYRUS.

Well, the day after—promise you'll come the day after.

MARY.

I won't promise. (*Kissing him.*) Good-bye, dear. (*Kissing him warmly.*) Good-bye, my dear, dear father! God bless you! Good-bye.

CYRUS.

Good-bye. (*Goes up ladder to his room, opens door.*) Ah, you shall see, dear. Your old father is not such a fool as they think him. He's going to make a great fortune for you, dear! You shall be rich and happy, and ride in your carriage, and everybody shall look up to you! Yes, dear, we shall see! Good-bye! Good-bye!

(*Enters his room, and closes door. The ladder remains down.* MARY *nods and laughs, and kisses her hand to him. The moment the door is closed, she bursts into a flood of tears, stands mechanically repeating his words.*)

[1] L. *of steps.*

MARY.[1]

"It would have killed me if my daughter—" "It's a mercy her shame is hidden—is hidden in the grave." "Death is a thousand times better." Oh, my father, how shall I hide myself, how shall I spare you the blow? "Death is better!" (*Suddenly.*) You shall think me dead. I will go away.[2] You shall hear that I have died in a strange country. And it will be true, for from this time forth I shall be dead to you. Yes, Mary Blenkarn, your child who never guessed what evil was, is dead. This isn't me! No, I am dead, and that is all you shall ever know of me. In a few months you shall learn that I have died—there will be no disgrace for you in that, and you shall never know how sinful and unhappy I have

[2] *Advances a little.*

been. How can I save you from troubling about my leaving you? I'll write [1]—there's a pen and ink in the next room. (*Looks round, goes to inner door,*[2] *opens it softly, calls softly.*) Nancy! She's upstairs. I'm glad of that. I couldn't bear to meet her again. (*Exit.*)[3]

[1] *Goes to table.*
[2] R.
[3] *Door* R. U. E.

(*Rather long pause.* JESSE PEGG *enters,*[4] *sulky, crestfallen, looks all round to see that nobody is about—flings his carpet bag under bench—looks at* NANCY'S *place, finally removes her chair, opens the roll of carpet along her bench, replaces her chair in position, till he is satisfied all is quite comfortable, sees the handkerchief she has taken off lying on her bench, takes it up, kisses it passionately again and again, puts it in his pocket,*[5] *hangs up hat, takes off coat, sits down to work a moment, sees the curtain which is drawn on one side, rises, draws it across the place where he sits, so that it hides him.*) (*Re-enter* MARY.)[6]

[4] L.
[5] *Crosses to* L.
[6] *Door* R. U. E.

MARY.

(*letter in hand*) I have thought of everything. If they follow me, they will think I have taken the express to London. Yes, that will be the surest plan of getting away. Forgive me for deceiving you, father. This will soften my departure—and when the news comes that I am dead, you must not grieve for me, father, I'm not worth it—

(*Kisses letter, then places it on table, goes left.*)

(CHANDLER *enters.*)[7]

[7] L.

MARY.

Mr. Chandler! (*Shows great shame.*)[8]

[8] *Turns away to* R.

(CHAN. *looks cautiously round—in a low, cautious voice.*)

CHAN.

My dear Miss Blenkarn, I want a word with you. We can perhaps speak better here than at the Hall.[9]

[9] *Puts hat and stick on table.*

MARY.

[1] R. *of table back to him.* (*low voiced, deeply ashamed*) Go on, sir.[1]

[2] R. C.

CHAN.[2]

(*cautious, low voice, watching her keenly*) I have been thinking it would be wise of you to leave Tatlow.

MARY.

(*hurriedly*) Yes, I know. I am going.

CHAN.

You have spoken to your father?

MARY.

No, I've written to him. (*Indicating letter on table.*)

CHAN.

And you've told him—

MARY.

Nothing, only that I have not been very happy lately at Tatlow Hall, and not wishing to cause any unpleasantness between you and him, I have obtained a situation at a distance and have gone to it.

CHAN.

(*much relieved*) Very sensible—very sensible indeed. It shows great consideration for his feelings. And you go at once?

MARY.

[3] *Going* L. Yes, this morning, now.[3]

CHAN.

[4] C. *of stage.* (*intercepting*)[4] You will allow me to assist you? (*Takes out note-case.*)

MARY.

No—except—there is rather over a month's salary due to me.

CHAN.

Allow me to make it a hundred pounds— a hundred and fifty—you're welcome.

MARY.

No, only what is due to me. Not a farthing more.

CHAN.

Very well, since you insist. (*Puts note case away.*) But I should like to have shown my generosity. (*Putting money on table.*)

MARY.

(*taking up money*) Thank you. (*Going.*) Good day.

CHAN.

Stay, I should like to have some news of you. (*Intercepting her.*)[1]

MARY.

My father will have news of me soon. You will hear what has become of me through him.

CHAN.

At least, you will allow me to express my regret—in fact, my sorrow—at the rascally conduct of my son—

MARY.

Oh, please don't speak of it—(*hiding her head.*)

CHAN.

Oh, I must—I shall write him what I think!

MARY.

You have heard from him?

CHAN.

Yes, no, at least, a telegram. He is nearly at Rome —to-morrow he will be on his way to Egypt.

MARY.

(*mechanically*) Rome—Egypt.

CHAN.

I shall tell him that I consider his behaviour most shameful—to ruin and betray the daughter of a man

[1] C.

Call 9.
Cyrus.
Chandler.

whom I respect as I respect your father—I shall say—

MARY.

[1] *Crosses to* L. Oh, please, no more—let me go[1]—(*Much agitated.*)

CHAN.

Miss Blenkarn. (MARY *stops.*) (*Cunningly.*) I may rely that you will not mention Captain Chandler's name—

(MARY, *at door, looks him full in the face for the first time.*)

[2] L. MARY.[2]

[3] *Door* L. Do you think it possible I could? (*Exit.*)[3]

CHAN.

Hum, she's a very foolish, quixotic girl! However, we're well rid of her. I wish she had taken a hundred pounds or so. It would have made my conscience quite easy. Well, I did offer it to her; it's her own fault.[4] Lucky I happened to come across that letter of Julian's. The young fool! He'll soon forget her.[5] (*Exit.*)[6]

[4] *Takes hat from table.*

[5] *With a sigh of relief.*

[6] *Door* L.

(JESSE *slowly draws aside the curtain.*)

JESSE.

What shall I do? How shall I tell him? I can't—it will break his heart. I'd better let it be, perhaps, then he'll never know. It's no business of mine—Nancy's sister! And that villain gone off! He might be brought back. Yes, it is my business, and if anything's to be done, it must be done now. Yes, I'll tell him. (*Goes up to steps, shouts.*) Mr. Blenkarn, sir, Mr. Blenkarn, do you hear, sir? Mr. Blenkarn.

(*The door at top of ladder opens, and* CYRUS *appears.*)

CYRUS.

What is it, Jesse?

JESSE.

I've got some news for you, sir—(CYRUS *coming down ladder.*)

CYRUS.

News, Jesse? Well, I'm so busy.

JESSE.

About Miss Mary. (*Comes down a little.*)

CYRUS.

(*quickening his steps*) About Mary? What's that?

JESSE.

Well, sir, she's—[1]

[1] *Turns away L. C.*

(CYRUS *comes to* JESSE, *examining his face.* JESSE *turns aside his face.*)

CYRUS.

Not bad news, Jesse? (JESSE *nods.*) But she was here just now. There's been no accident? She's not dead?

JESSE.

No—

CYRUS.

Thank God! Thank God!

JESSE.

(*very sadly*) Worse than that, sir.

CYRUS.

Worse than death! (*Pause.*) What do you mean, Jesse?

JESSE.

(*after a pause*) I mean, sir, that Captain Chandler's as damned a villain as ever breathed.

CYRUS.

(*is puzzled*) Captain Chandler! My Mary!

(*Then shows he guesses.*) It's a lie! (*About to strike him.*)

JESSE.

It's the truth, as I'm standing here! Do you think I'd tell you a lie about such a thing, sir?

(CYRUS *stands overwhelmed for some seconds, then very quietly.*)

CYRUS.

How do you know, Jesse?

JESSE.

I heard it from Mr. Chandler's own lips just now. He offered Miss Mary money—

CYRUS.

(*stung*) He offered her money? Where is he? Fetch him to me. Where is he?

JESSE.

(*goes to window*) He left here a minute or two ago. There he is, going to his office! (*Goes to door,*[1] *opens it and calls.*) Mr. Chandler! Mr. Chandler! You're wanted here! (*To* CYRUS.) He's coming, sir! Oh, Mr. Blenkarn, you see what you've done! You've made the father rich, and the son robs you of your own flesh and blood! Don't spare him, sir! Don't spare him! (CHANDLER *enters.*)[2] Mr. Blenkarn wishes to speak to you, sir.[3] (*Exit* JESSE.)[4]

[1] L.

[2] *Door* L.

[3] *Crosses to door behind Chandler.*

[4] *Door* L.

CHAN.

(*suspicious, discomposed*) Well, Blenkarn?

CYRUS.

He says—he says—my Mary—Captain Chandler—Oh, my God![5]

[5] *Staggers a little.*

CHAN.

I'm very sorry, Blenkarn—deeply sorry, I assure you.

CYRUS.[1]

Then it's true! And you knew! You knew and kept it back from me!

CHAN.

I only learned it yesterday.

CYRUS.

Yesterday? But that would have been in time! He was here yesterday, and—ah! (*Suddenly.*) I took his money. I've got some of it now. He paid me! He paid me! (*Taking money out of pocket, dashing it on floor, trampling on it.*) Curse his money! Curse his money! Curse—curse—curse—Money for her innocence—oh, my Mary! Would I'd died rather than this, my girl! My girl! My girl! (*Sits on steps and sobs violently.*)

(CHAN. *after a pause goes to him.*)

CHAN.

Come, Blenkarn, don't give way![2] I sympathise with you—I do indeed, and I'll see what can be done.

CYRUS.

(*rises*) You will? I knew you would! Thank you, sir! Thank you! She's a lady—she won't disgrace your family. You'll send for him to make it right?[3]

CHAN.

I'm afraid that is out of the question,[4] but I'll do what I can for you and your daughter.

CYRUS.[5]

There's only one thing you can do! It's his duty to marry her! Send for him!

CHAN.

It would be useless! He's nearly at Rome by this time, and he cannot come back! He's on his country's business!

[1] *with a cry of despair.*

[2] *Puts hand on Cyrus' shoulder.*

[3] *Eyes cast down as if ashamed.*

[4] *Goes down L. two steps.*

[5] *Looking up with dignity.*

CYRUS.

His country's business! But he's ruined my child! And she—what will become of her? You'll send for him—you'll send for him. Tell me where he is and I'll go myself! Where is he? Send for him, write, telegraph, send for him! I'll work for you! I'll slave night and day! I'll wear my fingers to the bone! Every hour of the rest of my life shall be yours, only save—(*Falls on his knees to* CHANDLER, *looks up for a moment or two, dumb with entreaty.*) My child, save her! Yes—yes—you will—you will —you must—you shall [1]—yes—please save her, save her, save her, save her. (*Falls dumb and breathless on his knees against table.*)[2]

[1] *Rise. Chan. turns facing him.*

[2] R. C.

CHAN.

[3] *Crossing to him.*

(*after a pause*) This is quite useless,[3] Blenkarn. It can answer no purpose.

(CYRUS, *in removing hand from face, catches sight of letter on table.*)

CYRUS.

What's this? A letter from her. (*Kisses it.*) Oh, my dear, my dear! (*Tears it open, reads.*)

CHAN.

[4] *Going* L. *a little way.*

(*watching him*) Perhaps it's as well he knows![4] He's too fond of her to make it public! And it will all blow over in a few days!

CYRUS.

[5] *Head on table.*

She's gone! She's gone! She's left me! Left me![5] (*On his knees.*)

[6] *Crossing to Blenkarn.*

CHAN.[6]

Well! Well! It's better for her to be away from Tatlow for the present! The truth need never be known! Come, Blenkarn, rely on me to do everything that lies in my power for both of you.

CYRUS.

[7] *Intense grief.*

But you won't send for him?[5]

CHAN.[1]

I cannot.[2] I wish to act like an honourable man—[3]

CYRUS.

But you won't send for him?[4]

CHAN.

He wouldn't come.[4] But I'll provide handsomely for you—you shall be my under manager at the new works.

CYRUS.

But you won't send for him?[5]

CHAN.

Really, Blenkarn, you make me angry![6] I'll do everything in reason! I'll make your daughter an allowance—any sum—

CYRUS.

But you won't send for him?[7]

CHAN.

No! (*Exit.*)[8]

CYRUS.

Hear! Hear![9] Thou that holdest the scales! Judge between this man and me! A balance! A balance! Give justice here! I've made him rich and proud—let me now make him poor and despised. He mocks at my grief. Let me some day mock at his! Let me hold his flesh and blood as cheap as he holds mine! Show me some way to bring him to the dust! Give him and his dearest into my keeping! Make them clay in my hands that I may shape and mould them as I choose, and melt them like wax in the fire of my revenge!

CURTAIN.

[1] *Turns away one step.*

[2] *Turning to Blenkarn.*

[3] *Sneeringly.*

[4] *Turns away.*

[5] *Angrily.*

[6] *Turns away.*

[7] *Pleadingly.*

[8] L.

[9] *Rises. Calls.*

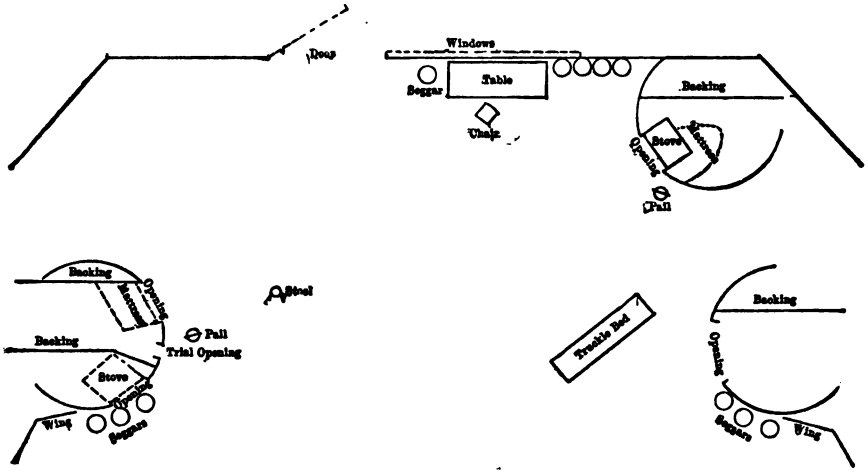
1st picture. Cyrus discovered alone, distracted with grief. He gives a loud cry of anguish, and staggers towards window as curtain descends.

2nd picture. Cyrus seated by window leaning on table, his face buried in his hands. Jesse standing by his R. shoulder, trying to rouse him. Nancy standing C. reading Mary's letter. Both doors open.

Time 50 minutes.

THE MIDDLEMAN
ACT III.

Illuminated Landscape Cloth showing vaguely a manufacturing district, with kilns burning.



ACT III.

SCENES—*Shed containing* CYRUS BLENKARN'S *firing ovens or kilns. At back a door,*[0] *and a window,*[1] *giving a view of a landscape in the English pottery district at night, with kilns vaguely seen by the flickering lights their fires give out. Down stage right a kiln burning; down stage left a kiln not burning; above it another kiln burning, with openings as in plan. A truckle bed down stage left centre. A stool towards the right of stage. A table up against the window. A chair close to it. Seggars as in plan. The scattered remains of a heap of coal.*

[0] R. C.

[1] L. C.

Call 1.
Cyrus.
Nancy.
Todd.

Discover CYRUS, *seated on stool,*[2] *gazing into the oven which throws a glow upon his face. He has aged considerably; his hair has grown quite white, his face sharper and keener set—his whole appearance much wilder and poorer than in Act I—his dress quite in rags. He is apparently overcome with fatigue, and is almost asleep. Rouses himself with a start.*

[2] R. C.

CYRUS.

(*looking intently into fire*) The heat's going down! I must keep it up. There's twenty more hours to burn! Nancy! Nancy! (*Calling off, then goes to coal heap, scrapes up nearly all that remains, shoves it in kiln.*)[3] What shall I do for coal when this is gone?

[3] *Three shovelfuls. Flash each time coals put in.*

(NANCY *enters.*[4] *She is dressed in mourning, very plain and inexpensive.*)

[4] L. *between ovens.*

NANCY.

Yes, father.[5]

[5] C.

CYRUS.[6]

Go to the railway yard. Try all the coal merchants. Tell them I'm firing over a thousand more specimens, and I'm bound to find out the secret at last.[7]

[6] R., *takes trial from kiln.*

[7] *Puts iron with trial piece on bucket to cool.*

NANCY.

(*listless and despairing*) It's no use, father. You know I went yesterday, They won't trust you any more.

CYRUS.

Go again! If I don't have coal, these ovens will go out and all my work will be lost. Look, that oven has gone out.

NANCY.

Father, wouldn't it be better to give it up?

CYRUS.

Have you forgotten your sister? [1]

[1] *Taking up stoking iron.*

NANCY.

Mary is dead.

CYRUS.

(*hard, tearless*) Yes, she is dead. But the man who betrayed her is living. And his father, his father who might have saved her, is living. They live, these Chandlers, and I live, to humble them! [2] Where's Jesse?

Call 2. Chandler.

[2] *Stoking lower furnace. Flash.*

NANCY.

Asleep.

CYRUS.

Asleep?

NANCY.

You forget he's been helping you the last three nights, and has had no rest.

CYRUS.

What's to-day?

NANCY.[3]

[3] *Going to him.*

Thursday, and you haven't had any sleep since the night before you lighted the first oven.

CYRUS.

I want no sleep.

NANCY.

You can't keep on like this for ever!

CYRUS.

No, not for ever, but long enough—long enough.

NANCY.

Father, if you should break down, if you should die!

CYRUS.

(*with a calm, hard smile*) I can't die till my work's done. Go and get me some coal! Offer them any price, ten, twenty pounds a ton. Don't take any denial! I must have it! I will have it![1]

[1] *Stoking oven* R. *Flash.*

NANCY.

Poor father! Is he mad, as all the people say? (*Exit.*)[2]

[2] L.

CYRUS.

(*taking up trial piece from bucket, puts it in water, looks at it.*) No—it won't do—it's as soft as dough, and it should be as hard as my heart! (TODD *enters.*)[3]

[3] *Door* R. C.

TODD.[4]

[4] C.

(*brisk, sprightly*) Well, Blenkarn, how goes it? What's the latest? How are we getting on?

CYRUS.[5]

[5] R.

[6] *Oven down* L.

[7] *Crosses to* L.

Badly, Mr. Todd. That fire[6] went out yesterday.[7]

TODD.

Well, wasn't it nearly time?

CYRUS.

No, it ought to have been kept in a dozen hours longer at least.[8]

[8] *Sits on truckle bed* L.

TODD.

Have you got any of the specimens?

CYRUS.

Not yet—the oven isn't quite cool enough yet. I shall be able to get at them soon. But I expect they're all spoiled, and if I don't get some more

coals, these will go out too.[1] Let me have five pounds more, Mr. Todd?

[1] *Rises, goes to Todd* C.

TODD.

Not on our present agreement, Blenkarn. But I tell you what I'll do. I'll advance you twenty pounds more on condition that *if* you discover the secret of making the old Tatlow ware, I shall have the option of buying the patent from you for five hundred pounds.

CYRUS.

I don't sell my patent.[2]

[2] *Goes to oven up* L.

TODD.

But, my good man—look here, Blenkarn, you're a decent sort of fellow, and I want to do you a good turn. I'll advance you fifty pounds now, and give you a thousand down if you make the discovery. Come now, that's fair, isn't it?

CYRUS.

I don't sell my patent.[3]

[3] *Goes* R. *for shovel.*

TODD.[4]

[4] C.

You won't come to any arrangement?

CYRUS.[5]

[5] *Returning to oven up* L.

Our arrangement is made. You've lent me thirty pounds, and when I discover the way to make the old ware, you are to find some man with money to put me in business.[6]

[6] *Putting on coals on fire of oven up* L.

TODD.

Exactly—and I've got my capitalist ready, and the moment I say 'Go,' down he planks his ten thousand pounds and off we go in a gallop. But where do I come in, Blenkarn? (*Plaintively.*) Where do I come in?

CYRUS.

You are to be my manager.

TODD.

Oh no, it ain't good enough, Blenkarn. I must be a partner.

CYRUS.

A partner! (CYRUS *looks at* TODD *and says nothing.*)[1]

[1] *Goes to lower oven* L.

TODD.

Aye, suppose you do make this discovery, you'll want working. Everybody wants working in this age. Advertise! Beat the big drum! Stick your name up at every railway station in England in bigger letters than anybody else! That's what does the trick with the great British public! Look what a great man I made of Mr. Chandler! And if you succeed in this invention, I can make a great man of you!

[2] *Crossing to oven* R.

CYRUS.[2]

I don't want to be made a great man by you, Mr. Todd.

TODD.

(*looking at him, aside*) If the old bird should find it out after all. It would be all U. P. with my friend Chandler—especially with his big Stock Exchange specs which always turn out wrong.

[3] *Up* R.

CYRUS.[3]

The heat is going down still! Mr. Todd, let me have another five pounds. I'll give you fifty for it—I'll give you a hundred.

TODD.

Not a farthing, Blenkarn, unless I stand in with the profits. What do you say?[4]

[4] *Rattling money in his pockets.*

CYRUS.

(*tempted for a moment, then firmly*) No, my profits shall be my own for the future.

TODD.

You're a very obstinate, self-willed man.

(CHANDLER *crosses the window.*)

Chandler! Not a word to him about our little affair!

CYRUS.

I have no dealings with Chandler.[1]

(CHANDLER *enters at back, shows slight surprise at seeing* TODD. CYRUS *sits on truckle bed.*)[2]

CHAN.[3]

(*loud patronising voice*) Well, Blenkarn! (CYRUS *takes no notice.*) Blenkarn![4] I hear you've got into very low water, and just to show you that I don't bear you any malice for leaving my employ, I've come to offer to take you back.

CYRUS.

I'm not so low as that!

CHAN.

You were foolish to leave me after having been a faithful servant to me for so many years.

CYRUS.

I served you faithfully, did I?

CHAN.

Yes, and you ought to have taken the position I offered you as second manager in the new works.

CYRUS.

I've done better.

CHAN.

Come, come! You know you're in debt!

CYRUS.

Yes, I'm in debt. I owe you something, don't I?

CHAN.

There was a trifle.

CYRUS.

(*with meaning*) I shall pay you.

[1] *Crosses to* L. *Todd gets* R

[2] L.

[3] C.

[4] *Comes in front of Cyrus.*

CHAN.

Oh, I'll put that in the bargain.

CYRUS.

What bargain?

[1] C.

CHAN.[1]

I'll take you back for a term of six years at four hundred a year on condition that any little improvements you may happen to make in porcelain during that six years belong to me. I think that's a very generous offer, Todd? Turning to Todd.

[2] R. C.

TODD.[2]

Generous! It's magnificent! It's quixotic!

[3] C.

CHAN.[3]

Candidly, Todd?

TODD.

On my honour—you know I never flatter.

CHAN.

Call S. Nancy.

Ah well, you heard my offer, Blenkarn, what do you say to it?

CYRUS.

[4] *Rises.*

[5] *Goes up* L. *and is busy at furnace,* L. U. E.

Nothing.[4] (*Turns his back on* CHANDLER.)[5]

TODD.

[6] R.

(*beckons* CHANDLER *down stage;*[6] *the following conversation confidential*) You're very well out of that! He'll never discover the secret of the old Tatlow.

CHAN.

It would be awkward for me, Todd, if he did! Here's trade falling off, and I'm bound to go on with the new works. And did you see there's another big fall in Cornubians again?

TODD.

I should sell out.

CHAN.

And drop ten thousand! It seems as if everything was turning against me.

TODD.

You're safe enough. Can't you see he's as mad as a hatter? [1]

[1] *Winks at Chandler.*

CHAN.[2]

[2] *After a look at Cyrus.*

Think so?

TODD.

Sure of it. I've pumped him. Poor old fellow, in less than three months he'll be in a lunatic asylum.

CHAN.

(*placidly*) Well, I don't wish him any harm, but taking everything into consideration, perhaps that would be best for all parties.

TODD.

Exactly. Suit us all down to the ground.[3]

[3] *Cyrus is at oven* L. U. E. *taking trials.*

CHAN.

They're very kind to the people in such places?

TODD.

Treat 'em like fighting cocks. Don't you trouble any more about his blessed old Tatlow—it's a dream, a myth, a delusion, a sell!

CHAN.

I hope so. (*Takes out his watch.*) Kempster was to be at the office at seven—you'd better go to him.

TODD.

Yes. Ain't you coming? [4]

[4] *Cyrus goes up to window and watches for Nancy.*

CHAN.

I want a word with Blenkarn first.[5]

[5] *Going down* L.

TODD.

(*aside*) He means to nail him, and then what's to become of me? [6]

[6] *Down* R.

CHAN.[7]

[7] *Turns round.*

What are you waiting for?

TODD.

(*apparently surprised*) Eh? Simply absence of

mind—unconsciously waiting for you—sort of wish that you would come with me. (*Aside.*) Hang it all! (*Exit.*)[1]

[1] D. in F., R. C. then past window to L.

(CHANDLER[2] *looks at* CYRUS. CYRUS *takes no notice.* CHANDLER *fidgets with his umbrella, coughs.*)

[2] Goes up R. C. Cyrus dips trial piece in water, etc.

CHAN.

(*embarrassed*) Hm, Blenkarn! Blenkarn! This is really terrible about your poor daughter Mary.

CYRUS.[3]

[3] Up stage L.

She doesn't need your pity.

CHAN.

No, but I assure you the news of her death touched me very deeply.

CYRUS.

(*looks at him*) Ah!

CHAN.

For the last two months I've been coming to offer you my sympathy, but I put it off and put it off!

CYRUS.

[4] Throws down broken trial piece, and crosses to R.

Put it off a little longer.[4]

CHAN.

You don't want my sympathy.

[5] R.

CYRUS.[5]

[6] Picks up stoking iron.

Not yet—I'll send for you when I want it.[6]

CHAN.

You're a strange man, Blenkarn! You don't seem to feel your daughter's loss.

[7] At R. oven.

CYRUS.[7]

No, I haven't shed one tear. My heart has been dry, so have my eyes. I haven't thought much about her death. I've had other business.[8] When that's done, I shall have time to remember that she's dead, and I'll send for you.[9]

[8] Stoking fire.

[9] Stoking fire R.

CHAN.

(*aside*) His favourite daughter dead, and he not troubling about it! Gives all his thoughts to his inventions! If he should make the discovery! I must buy him somehow! It won't do to run the risk! Yes, I must make it safe.[1]

[1] *Gets down* L.

(*Enter* NANCY.)[2]

[2] L.

Call L. *Maude.* (*Purse*). *Jesse.*

CYRUS.

(*eagerly*) Well, what do they say?[3]

[3] R.

NANCY.

They won't trust you.[4]

[4] C.

CYRUS.

Did you try all of them?

NANCY.

Yes, every one! I offered them any price they liked! It was no use! They know we have no money!

(CYRUS, *with a gesture of despair, sinks upon stool,*[5] *dazed and dejected.* CHANDLER *beckons* NANCY *to him.*)

[5] *Up* R.

CHAN.[6]

[6] L.

He'd better come back to me! (NANCY *looks enquiringly at* CHANDLER.) I've forgiven his ingratitude, and I've offered to take him back at a salary of four hundred a year!

NANCY.[7]

[7] L. C.

You're very kind, Mr. Chandler, but—(*shaking her head.*) He won't come.

CHAN.

If he doesn't, you'll both starve. Come, you're a sensible girl. Give him a good sound talking to! Bring him to his senses![8] (*To* CYRUS) Blenkarn, I shall consider that matter open! I'll look in again in half an hour for your answer! (*He looks at* CYRUS, *who sits absorbed taking no notice, then exit.*)[9]

[8] *Crosses to* C.

[9] D. *in* F., R. C. *and off left.*

[1] L. C.

NANCY.[1]

(*Looking at* CYRUS, *aside*) Perhaps Mr. Chandler is right. It would mean rest and comfort for his old age, instead of beggary and work. I'll try! (*Comes to* CYRUS.) Father! (CYRUS *is still abstracted.*) Father![2]

[2] *Touching his shoulder.*

CYRUS.

Yes, Nancy!

NANCY.

Suppose these thousand specimens all turn out wrong, what will you do then?

CYRUS.

Make another thousand.

NANCY.

But you've sold everything—you've even parted with your collection—where's the money to come from for fresh experiments?

CYRUS.

I must earn it.

NANCY.

And if *they* turn out wrong, what then?

CYRUS.

Begin again.

NANCY.

But we shall starve. Father! Hear me! I'm your only child now. If you were to find out this invention, and make a fortune, if you were to own all the county, you could only leave it to me. I don't want it. I don't want to be rich! But I do want food and clothes, and you know how many times lately I've not had enough to eat.

CYRUS.

It is hard. Have patience, Nancy! Who knows? I may have found out the secret! It may be firing in one of these ovens now! I must find it out soon![3]

[3] *Rises.*

NANCY.

That's what you've said all your life. You began trying to make the old China twenty years ago, and to-day you're as far from it as ever.

CYRUS.

No, I'm twenty years nearer!

NANCY.

You'll never be nearer! Father, if you love me, be wise at last. I don't beg for myself, but for your own sake. Give up this mad dream,[1] and spend the rest of your life in quiet and plenty. Take Mr. Chandler's offer.

[1] *Cyrus laughs.*

CYRUS.

Ah! (NANCY *drops on her knees.*) Take Mr. Chandler's offer! Sell myself to the father of the man that robbed me of my dead, dear one, and perhaps brought her to her grave. Give up my life's work! Give up all my labour and thought! Ah! That's like you, Nancy! You never believed in me! Mary, my Mary, you believed in me! If you were here now! And I told you that death was better than living shame! I didn't mean it, dear! I wouldn't mind your shame if you could come back to me. I would help you bear it, and you would help me with your soft, low voice and loving ways. Mary! Mary! Mary! You wouldn't have spoken to me as your sister has done![2]

[2] *Sits.*

NANCY.

(*deeply touched*) Father, forgive me! Forgive me![3] I didn't mean it! I only said it for your own sake! I'll never be unkind to you again! Father, let me help you. Let me take Mary's place now she is gone!

[3] *Flinging her arms round him. Cyrus repulses her.*

CYRUS.

(*kissing her*) So you shall, dear! God bless you! God bless you! (*Very tenderly, then looking round, remembering.*) I'm forgetting my work.[4]

[4] *Cross to oven, L. 1 E.*

NANCY.

And I too! What can I do? That oven! Can I help you get the specimens out?

CYRUS.

[1] *Touching it.*

No, it's not quite cool enough yet![1] I used such heat, Nancy, as I've never used before! And to think I had to let it out for want of coal!

NANCY.

[2] *Comes to Cyrus.*

Perhaps some of the pieces may be thoroughly fired.[2]

[3] *Embracing her.*

CYRUS.[3]

That's right. Good girl. Call Jesse, and get him to fetch some wood.

NANCY.

[4] L.

(*calling off*)[4] Jesse! Jesse!

CYRUS.

He's not to touch the pieces in that oven. I want to take them out myself. (*Looking at fires.*) Going down! If they would but let me have a little more coal—a ton only! I'll try them again! I'll go myself![5] They must listen to me! They'll never let all my work perish for the sake of a few shillings! Keep the fires up while I'm gone, dear. Get Jesse to help you. Don't let them go out. They mustn't go out! They shan't! Keep them white hot—they keep me alive! While they burn, my hope and life burn too! (*Exit.*)[6]

[5] *Nancy helps him on with coat.*

[6] *Door in flat* R. C. *and off* R.

NANCY.

(*up at door*) He'll never rest till he has done it, or till he is in his grave!

[7] L.

(*Enter* MAUDE.)[7]

[8] L. C.

MAUDE.[8]

(*uncertain, timid*) Nancy, I knocked at the door, but you weren't in the house. You'll forgive my coming here? I came to tell you how sorry I was to hear—about Mary.

NANCY.

Thank you. (*Restrained.*)[1]

[1] *Comes down* C.

MAUDE.

Nancy, what is this mystery about her? Why did she leaves us so suddenly?[2] Why did she go away from England? There's no doubt she is dead?

[2] L. C.

NANCY.

What doubt can there be? We received the newspaper containing the account of her death.

Check lights at back.

MAUDE.

She died at sea, did she not?

NANCY.

Yes.

MAUDE.

What made her leave her home?

NANCY.[3]

Please say no more.

[3] *Shows pain and embarrassment.*

MAUDE.

Forgive me. I ought to have known better than to have spoken. But, Nancy—don't be angry with me—it was not curiosity. It was because I loved Mary, and—we are friends, are we not? (NANCY *does not Speak.*) Won't you speak to me? (*Holds out her hand.*) For Mary's sake, Nancy!

(NANCY *impulsively takes* MAUDE'S *hand and kisses it.*)

NANCY.[4]

Thank you, thank you, Miss Chandler, for your love for her.

[4] R. C.

MAUDE.[5]

(*taking out purse*) And, Nancy, you will let me help you.

[5] C.

NANCY.

No—I can't take any money from you, Miss Chandler.

[0] L.
[1] Remains L. C.

(JESSE *enters,*[0] *stolidly watching.*)[1]

[2] C.

MAUDE.[2]

Don't show pride to an old friend, Nancy.

[3] R.

NANCY.[3]

It's not pride, but I can't take your money, Miss Chandler.

[4] L. C.

(JESSE *comes stolidly down,*[4] *stares suspiciously at* MAUDE. MAUDE *shows embarrassment.*)

[5] C.

MAUDE.[5]

(*confused*) Oh, Mr. Pegg, you are not in our works now?

JESSE.

[6] L. C.

(*stolidly*) No.[6]

MAUDE.

I hope you are well and happy.

JESSE.

Middling. (*Stares at her.*)

MAUDE.

[7] Goes up L.
[8] L.

(*her embarrassment increases,*[7]*—aside*) He used to be so civil. What can have happened? (*Exit.*)[8]

Check limes slightly.

JESSE.

Why didn't you take the money? Spoil the Egyptians, I say!

[9] R. C.

NANCY.[9]

I've promised my father never to take a favour from them.

JESSE.

Did you see the news in the paper this morning?

NANCY.

About the African expedition?

JESSE.

Yes. Captain Chandler has been distinguishing himself again. Daring act of bravery and hair-

breadth escape! I wish the black devils had killed him![1]

[1] *Turn up* L.

NANCY.

What good would that do now Mary is dead? You'll look after the ovens till my father comes back?[2]

[2] *Going* L.

JESSE.

Don't go, Miss Nancy![3] (*Abjectly.*) Don't go! While you're here, this place is like a little heaven below, and when you're gone it's like a little—other place.[4]

[3] *Runs in front of her.*

[4] *Picks up stoking iron.*

NANCY.

And what are you?

JESSE.

When you're kind to me, I'm nearly good enough to be an angel, but when you despise and maltreat me I feel (*vigorously stirring the furnace with poker*)—I'm a lost spirit, pitchforking other lost spirits, and (*gloating*)[5] I like it. Oh, Nancy, do try to love me! Do try! If at first you don't succeed, try, try again! Won't you try? (*With abject persuasion.*)

[5] *Poking fire.*

Call 5. *Cyrus.*

NANCY.

No. (*Firmly.*)

JESSE.

(*fiercely*) You won't? (*Glares at her.*) You won't even try?

NANCY.

(*firmly and louder*) No! (JESSE *stands scowling at her.*) Listen to me, Mr. Pegg.[6] The more I try to love you, the more I don't succeed. Now perhaps if I weren't to try at all—

[6] *Rise.*

JESSE.

(*eagerly, overjoyed*) Do you think so? Then don't try to love me any more!

NANCY.

Very well, (*composedly*) I won't.

JESSE.

I mean—yes do. Can you bring me any good, sound, solid argument why you shouldn't marry me? No, you can't![1]

[1] *Throws down stoking iron.*

NANCY.

Attend to the ovens.[2] That's right. Now we'll talk about something else.[3]

[2] *Jesse goes to* R., *stokes furnace* R. *Nancy crosses* L.

[3] *Sits* L. C.

JESSE.[4]

[4] R.

No, now we're on the subject of marriage, let's argue it out.

NANCY.

No, we won't begin arguing before marriage. There'll be plenty of time for that afterwards.

JESSE.

Then you will? Oh, it's too much! It's too much! It can't be true! Nancy, it isn't true! Is it true?

NANCY.

(*very collected and calm*) Not at present. Listen to me. I don't love you—

JESSE.

That's of no consequence. I—

NANCY.

Hold your tongue!

JESSE.

(*meekly*) Yes.

NANCY.

I don't altogether dislike you—

JESSE.

Thank you, oh, thank you—thank you so very much.

NANCY.

Hold your tongue! I daresay we might get on very comfortably together as man and wife.

JESSE.

I'm sure of it! I'll take my oath of it. And—

NANCY.

Will you be quiet? Now if I were to promise to marry you, Jesse, would you—

JESSE.

(*jumping down her throat*) Yes, that I would! Anything. You shall have your own way in everything! Keep all the money! Go to Church or Chapel, just which you like! Keep the beer in the house so that I shall never have any excuse for going to a public! I'll never say an unkind word to you! I'll never get out of temper, even on washing day! I'll wait on you in health and sickness. I'll let you have your breakfast in bed! There, Nancy! What more could I promise?

Check limes.
Call 6.
Mr. Chandler.

NANCY.

Nothing. You certainly promise enough.[1] But I'm not thinking of myself.[2] Jesse, tell me, do you think father will ever discover the secret of the old Tatlow?

[1] *Jesse puts stoking iron down.*
[2] *Rise.*

JESSE.

I'm afraid he won't, Nancy.

NANCY.

And I'm afraid too. But he'll never give it up. And we must encourage him and help him and take care of him in his old age.[3]

[3] *Comes to Jesse.*

JESSE.

He's your father, Nancy. He shall be mine too.

NANCY.

Thank you, Jesse.[4] I'm going to ask you to make a great sacrifice. I give you my word I will marry you—

[4] *Takes his hands.*

JESSE.

(*with a frantic shout of delight*) Oh!

NANCY.

Be quiet! I will marry you—

JESSE.

Oh! It's too much!

NANCY.

Some day—

JESSE.

No hurry, Nancy—at least, no great hurry.

NANCY.

I know you have saved some money. (JESSE *shows disquiet.*) You had nearly a hundred pounds. I want you to lend it to my father. Will you?[1]

[1] *Hand on his arm.*

JESSE.

(*looks uncomfortable*) I'm very sorry, Nancy, I would if I could, but it's gone!

NANCY.

Gone? How? (*Pause.*) Where?

JESSE.

I've lent it to your father to carry on his experiments.

NANCY.

(*deeply touched*) Jesse!

JESSE.

He was afraid you'd be angry with him, so he made me promise I wouldn't tell you.

NANCY.

You lent it to him, though you knew it would come to no good?

JESSE.

I did it because I love you, Nancy.

NANCY.

(*very softly, very quietly, giving him her hand*) I will be your wife, Jesse.

[2] *Turn up L. C. stage together.*

JESSE.

Thank you, Nancy. You shall never be sorry.[2]

[3] *Stage has gradually grown darker.*

(*Enter* CYRUS *at door in flat,*[3] R. C.)

NANCY.

Father! What success? [1]

[1] *Crosses to Cyrus C.*

CYRUS. C.

None! They refuse me! They laugh at me! They tell me I'm mad! When I came to Tatlow, it was bankrupt, its trade was in ruin, its people starving. My invention, the fruit of my brain, fed it, and clothed it and brought it to prosperity! And now it laughs at me and tells me I'm mad! I suppose I am mad! I haven't fattened myself on another man's labour and tears! I must be mad! God made this world for parasites! I must be mad! A leech's mouth to fasten on your neighbour and suck all his blood from his heart! That's sanity, and I'm mad, my girl, for I haven't done it! [2] Ah, what have you been doing? The heat has gone down, and I shall never get it up again! All my work will be lost!

[2] *Frantically embracing her, then going to furnace R.*

JESSE.

I'm very sorry. There's no coal. [3]

[3] *L. C.*

CYRUS.

Some wood then! [4] If I could only keep these fires in for a few hours longer! Who knows I may have discovered the secret? And I shall lose it all for want of a little fuel! No, I won't though! (*Seizing chair, breaking it up and throwing it on fire.*)

[4] *Jesse exit L. U. E.*

NANCY.

Father what are you doing? (*Trying to stop him.*)

CYRUS.

Let me be! Let me be! I'm not mad! Another hour, another half hour may give me the secret I've been working for all my life! (NANCY *again tries to restrain him.*) Let me be, I say! They shan't go out while there's a stick or shred about the place that will burn. [5] Some wood, Jesse! The palings outside! Anything that will burn! Get it! D'ye hear?

[5] *Jesse re-enter L. U. E.*

You too, Nancy—make haste. (NANCY *and* JESSE *exeunt.*)[1] (*Looking round.*) All my work lost if I can't keep these fires in. If I could get at this oven. It must be cool enough by this time. (*Tearing down bricks.*) Come down, will you? Let's see what you've done for me after all my labour for you. (*Taking out specimens which are melted into all sorts of shapes.*) What! Couldn't you stand it? (*Taking out another.*) I've shrivelled you, have I? You too? (*Taking out another.*) All alike, all good for nothing. Nancy is right—I'm no nearer than I was twenty years ago. (*Another piece.*) All to begin over again. All my life wasted. (*Takes out a white vase, looks at it, whispers.*) I'm not mad! No, but I'm dreaming again. I've dreamed it so many times, and always waked to find it only a dream. But—(*Looks at it again, bursts into a long scream of delight.* JESSE *and* NANCY *enter with a large log.*)[2] Nancy, Nancy, look, my dear! Look, Jesse, I'm awake, am I not? Look! I've found out the secret! Look! Starve? We're rich, my girl, rich! You shall ride in your carriage, for I've done it! I've found the secret at last! I've done it! I've done it! (*He kisses her, bursts into hysterical laughter,*[3] *drops on bed, rocking to and fro. Knock at door.*)[4]

CHAN.

(*heard outside*) Blenkarn! Blenkarn!

CYRUS.

Come in. (*Enter* CHANDLER.)[5]

CHAN.[6]

I've been thinking things over, and I'll buy any patent that you may bring out. What's the matter, Blenkarn?

CYRUS.

Nothing. You'll buy—?

[1] D. *in* F. R. C. *and off* R.

[2] *Door to be closed after them.*

[3] L. C.

[4] *Nancy and Jesse get up stage* R. C.

[5] D. *in* F. R. C.

[6] *Entering, comes down* C.

CHAN.

I'll buy—What is it, Blenkarn?

CYRUS.

Go on—You'll buy—

CHAN.

(*looking at him*) I'll buy—

CYRUS.

What? My body and soul? Buy back the past thirty years! Buy back my girl from her grave in the sea! Buy back the sweat of my brow and the strength of my hands that I've wasted for you? *You'll* buy! No, *I* buy now! I buy *you!* Do you know the price I've paid for you? I've given the toil of my life! I've given hunger and tears and despair and agony! I've given my child to be your son's mistress! That's the price I've paid for you, but I've got you! I've bought you! You're mine! You're mine! You're mine!

(CYRUS, *laughing hysterically, staggers to bedside as* CURTAIN *falls.*)

NANCY, JESSE, CYRUS, CHANDLER.

1st picture. Cyrus seated on bedstead L. *alternately laughing and crying, vase in hand. Chandler amazed* R. *Jesse and Nancy at back.*

2nd picture. Cyrus still seated, frantically embracing Nancy, who is kneeling before him. Jesse standing L. *of Cyrus. Chandler in doorway, just going.*

Time.—30 minutes.

ACT IV.

(Call 1). Chandler. Mrs. Chandler. Maude. Todd.

SCENE:—*Tatlow Hall, as in Act I, but there are some changes in the furniture, and it is differently arranged.*

[1] L. C.

[2] *At back.*

Discover CHANDLER,[1] *with hands in pockets and in a despairing attitude. Enter*[2] MRS. CHANDLER *and* MAUDE *crying. They are in outdoor clothes.*

CHAN.

[3] L. C.

Are you ready?[3]

MRS. C.

Quite. I've sent everything on to Florence Cottages! Florence Cottages after Tatlow Hall! Six rooms after this![4]

[4] *Sits* C.

MAUDE.

Never mind, mamma! We shall be all the closer to one another, and learn to love each other all the more![5]

[5] R. C.

MRS. C.

Joseph, couldn't we leave Tatlow altogether?

CHAN.

Where could we go? It costs money to move, and I've got none.

MRS. C.

(*weeping*) To have to leave our home the very day that Julian is coming back, to receive our hero, a national hero, at that place![6]

[6] *Sits* C.

[7] *At back of settee.*

MAUDE.[7]

I don't think Julian will mind for himself. He was never selfish.

MRS. C.

But what will his wife think of us?

MAUDE.

Let's hope he's married somebody very nice who'll

think just as much of us in our new home as if we were living here!

CHAN.

You ought to have let me write to tell him I was a ruined man!

MRS. C.

He'll know it soon enough. Mr. Vachell might have allowed us to remain here a few days longer! Can't you ask him, Joseph?

CHAN.

No. He writes I must be prepared to give up possession and to go out at twelve o'clock to-day. He has already kept the place going for us the last six weeks, and paid all expenses.

MAUDE.

It's almost twelve now. Come, mamma, let's take one last look round the old place. We may never see it again.

MRS. C.[1]

Who would have thought that it would ever come to this? (*Going off at conservatory.*)[2]

[1] *Rising.*

[2] R.

MAUDE.

Won't you come with us and say good-bye to everything?

CHAN.[3]

No. I don't want to be reminded of what I was and what I am. (MAUDE *approaches slightly.*) Go away, Maude.

[3] *Sitting* C.

MAUDE.

Poor papa! (*Joins* MRS. C. *in conservatory, and goes off.*)

CHAN.

It's a hard world! A blackguard, cruel, heartless world! It's got no pity for a man!

TODD.

(*outside*) Never mind! I'll find him!

(*Enter* TODD *at back,*[1] *very brisk, sprightly, in capital spirits.*)

TODD.

Hillo, Chandler![2] (CHANDLER *rises and shows some respect to* TODD.) How goes it? Just passing, so I thought I'd give you a look in! So you're clearing out, eh? (*Cheerfully.*)

CHAN.

Yes, Todd.[3] Vachell is coming at twelve to take possession.

(TODD, *sitting at his ease in centre chair, regards* CHANDLER *for a few seconds with an expression of amused contempt, then in a cheerful, philosophic tone.*)

TODD.[4]

You've made a pretty mess of your affairs, Chandler. (*Looks at him.*)

CHAN.

You needn't remind me of that, Todd.[5]

TODD.

Oh, I'm always perfectly candid with you! You know I never flatter. You should have taken my advice, Chandler, and made me your partner.

CHAN.

But Blenkarn hasn't made you a partner.

TODD.

No. You see Pegg being his son-in-law naturally came first. But I've got a rattling good berth! Much better than I had with you!

CHAN.

The business has increased a good deal, I understand.

TODD.

Rather! We're coining money, like dirt! This new

[1] C. *from* R.

[2] L. C., *puts hat on* L. C. *table.*

[3] *Cross to* L.

[4] *Sitting on settee* L. C.

[5] *Sits* R.

(*Call 2*). *Vachell (bag and papers).*

ware is knocking everything else out of the market.

CHAN.

I'm so glad! I'm delighted! I thought perhaps there might be a vacancy for an under-manager?[1] (TODD *whistles.*) You might say a good word for me to Blenkarn, Todd.

[1] *Sits* L. *of Todd.*

TODD.

Ah! Well—

CHAN.

The fact is things are much worse than I expected—there will be a much smaller dividend than I hoped. It's absolutely necessary for me to get some employment at once to keep my family out of the workhouse.

TODD.

That's awkward. What the deuce made you plunge like you did on the Stock Exchange?

CHAN.

I did it to right myself when I found things were going wrong, and you know the more I plunged the deeper and deeper I got in the mess.[2] Well now, did you ever know anybody have such bad luck as I had?

Rises and crosses L.

TODD.

Bad luck? Bad judgment, you mean.

(*Call s*). *Servant. Sir Seton. Lady U.*

CHAN.

But you advised me, Todd. You were my right hand!

TODD.

Not when I saw how things were going. While Batty Todd worked you, you were a big man. Now Batty Todd works Cyrus Blenkarn, *he's* the big man. I'll tell you a secret, Chandler! It isn't *you,* it isn't *Blenkarn,* it's Batty Todd that's the big man. Batty Todd pulls the strings and—(*Business of illustrating marionettes.*)

CHAN.

Oh, quite so, Todd, quite so! You know I always had the highest opinion of you! You're quite a genius in your way, Todd!

TODD.

I am, and let me tell you, Mr. Cyrus Blenkarn is a devilish lucky fellow to get hold of such a chap as Batty Todd!

CHAN.

[1] *Comes to him eagerly.*

When do you expect Blenkarn back? [1]

TODD.

Can't say. We haven't heard from him for two or three weeks.

CHAN.

(*piteously*) I suppose you and Pegg couldn't give me a situation in his absence?

[2] *Rises.*

TODD.[2]

(*clapping his hand on* CHANDLER'S *shoulder*) My dear Chandler, nothing would please me better than doing a good turn to an old friend like you. But, candidly, you wouldn't be worth a penny a month to us, candidly, you wouldn't.

CHAN.

[3] *Standing side by side.*

You don't seem to admire me so much as you used, Todd.[3]

TODD.

(*shrugs his shoulders*) Well—umph.

CHAN.

What would you advise me to do?

TODD.

I should emigrate.

CHAN.

I don't think I'm suited for that.

TODD.

Try something you *are* suited for.

CHAN.

(*piteously*) But what am I suited for? I managed the old works for twenty years.

TODD.

Excuse me![1] *I* managed them. *You* took the money.

[1] *Sits* C.

CHAN.

Well, I was the head of the concern.

TODD.

The figure-head, you mean.

CHAN.

I don't see what else I'm fit for.

TODD.

No, figure-heads aren't much use in the navigation of the ship, are they?

CHAN.

(*very low tone, piteously*) I've come to my last shilling, Todd.

TODD.[2]

[2] *Rises briskly.*

Have you though? You don't mean to say it's as bad as that? Well, I must be going—[3]

[3] *Crosses up* R. *and takes hat.*

CHAN.

(*piteously*)[4] You won't forget me, Todd?[5]

[4] *Crosses to* C.

[5] *Stopping him.*

TODD.

Rely on me. I won't forget you.[6] By the way, don't call again at my office. I'm so busy just now. If anything turns up, I'll let you know. Well, good-bye. (*Cheerfully.*) Keep your spirits up—hope things will turn out all right for you.[7]

[6] *Comes back to* L. *of Chan.*

[7] *Going up* C.

CHAN.

Thank you, Todd. You were always a thoroughly good fellow. A perfect treasure to me! I've always said so!

(*Enter* VACHELL,[1] *meeting and stopping* TODD.)[2]

TODD.

Ah, Mr. Vachell, welcome to your new home! So you've come to take possession! I congratulate you! Of course you'll live here for the future?[3]

VACH.

No, Mr. Todd.[4]

TODD.

No?

VACH.

No.

TODD.

Oh! You mean to let it?

VACH.

No, Mr. Todd.

TODD.

No?

VACH.

No.

TODD.

Ah! I see! A little investment! Going to sell it again, eh?

VACH.

No.[5] (TODD *is puzzled.*)[6]

TODD.

(*confidently*) The estate won't be any good to cut up into building lots, you know!

VACH.

You don't think so?

TODD.

Sure it won't.

VACH.

Thank you. (TODD *stands there a few moments puzzled.*) I won't cut it up into building lots, Mr. Todd.

[1] *At back* C. *from* R.

[2] *Chan. gets* R.

[3] L. C.

[4] R. C.

[5] *Comes down* C.

[6] *Comes down again to* L. *of Vachell. Vachell reading a legal paper. Todd tries to overlook. Vachell quietly closes paper.*

(Call 4). Cyrus (notes).

TODD.

No—no—I wouldn't! (*Going off at back.*) What the deuce *has* he bought the place for? (*Exit.*)[1]

[1] C. *at back to* L.

VACH.

Mr. Chandler![2] You received my letter?

[2] *Shakes hands with Chandler.*

(MRS. CHANDLER *enters.*)[3]

[3] *From conservatory, comes to Chan's* R.

CHAN.

Yes, we are quite ready to go. And I'm sure, Vachell, we're exceedingly obliged to you for your kindness in allowing us to remain so long.

VACH.

You needn't thank me. I have only acted upon my instructions.

CHAN.[4]

[4] C.

Your instructions?

VACH.[5]

[5] L. C.

I have not bought Tatlow Hall for myself. It belongs to a client of mine.

MRS. C.[6]

[6] R. C.

A client?

VACH.

(*Call 5*). *Jesse. Nancy. Servant (letter on salver).*

It was his wish you should stay here till he could take possession himself. Yesterday I had notice from him he would be here at twelve to-day, and would require you to hand over everything to him personally.

CHAN.[7]

[7] C.

And who is the new owner of Tatlow Hall?

VACH.[8]

[8] L. C.

I am not at liberty to mention his name at present. (*Takes out watch.*) Excuse me; I expect him here every moment! (*Exit.*)[9]

[9] C. *to* R.

(CHANDLER *and* MRS. CHANDLER *look at each other.*)

CHAN.

Who can have bought the place?[1] (MAUDE *enters.*)[2]

MAUDE.

Sir Seton and Lady Umfraville have just driven up.

MRS. C.

It must be the Umfravilles! They've got the money from somewhere, and bought Tatlow Hall back again!

(SERVANT *enters,*[3] *and announces.*)

SERVANT.

Sir Seton and Lady Umfraville.

(*Enter*[4] SIR SETON *and* LADY UMFRAVILLE.)[5]

MRS. C.[6]

My dear Sir Seton![7] My dear Lady Umfraville!

CHAN.[8]

Upon my word, Sir Seton, this is really noble of you to call. It's touching![9]

SIR S.[10]

Hum—yes—[11] The fact is, Chandler, I ought to have come on this business before, but, as it was confoundedly disagreeable, I put it off till the last moment. But as your son is returning to-day—you know my position—now don't you think it would be very imprudent on all sides to allow this marriage between my daughter and your son to take place—eh?

CHAN.

I had a letter from my son this morning in which he —ah—ra—he tells me—that—

SIR. S.

That he releases Felicia. Of course as an honourable man he could do no less. Tell him I appreciate his conduct.

[1] C.

[2] *From conservatory.*

[3] *At back.*

[4] *At back.*

[5] *Come down* L. C.

[6] *Crosses* C.

[7] *Crosses to Sir S., then to Lady U.*

[8] L. C.

[9] *Shakes hands.*

[10] L. C.

[11] *Crosses back to Lady U.*

MAUDE.[1]

Sir Seton, you had better know the truth from us. My brother writes that he has married abroad.

SIR. S.

Has he? I congratulate him.

LADY U.

Most heartily.

MAUDE.

He asks us to break the news to Felicia.

SIR. S.

We will—we will. And now it's passed off so comfortably, there's no harm in our mentioning that—that—[2]

LADY U.[3]

Our dear Felicia has received an offer of marriage from young Strangeways, the banker—

(CHANDLER *and* MRS. CHANDLER *exchange looks.*)

SIR. S.

So there's nothing more to be said in the matter except to congratulate Captain Chandler—and—to express our sincere sympathy in your misfortunes, our deepest sympathy.[4]

CHAN.

We have to thank you for allowing us to remain at Tatlow Hall.

SIR S.

Remain at Tatlow Hall?

CHAN.

I suppose it is Mr. Strangeways who has bought the place?

SIR S.

Strangeways? No. Hasn't Vachell, the lawyer, bought it?

CHAN.

No. Not for himself. Only for some client, who

[1] *At back of settee.*

[2] *Glancing at Lady U.*

[3] *L.*

[4] *Shakes hands with Mr. C.*

has allowed us the use of the place and paid all the current expenses.[1]

[1] *Maude goes to door of conservatory.*

SIR S.

Indeed! Who can it be?

MRS. C.

We cannot imagine.

(VACHELL *enters.*)[2]

[2] *At back. Mrs. C. drops down* R.

SIR S.[3]

[3] L. C.

Ah, Vachell! You can explain. Who's the new owner here?

CHAN.[4]

[4] R. C.

Yes, Vachell—who is it that has been so kind to us?

(CYRUS *enters,*[5] *plainly, but well dressed.*)

[5] *At back* C. *from* R.

VACH.[6]

[6] C.

The new owner is Mr. Cyrus Blenkarn.

(CYRUS *comes down. All show great surprise.*)

CHAN.

Blenkarn! Then you—

CYRUS.[7]

[7] C., *calm.*

I will take possession of Tatlow Hall if you are ready to give it up.

CHAN.

[8] *Crosses to Cyrus.*

Yes, I am ready. But perhaps you'll allow me—[8]

CYRUS.

(*waves him off*) Give everything over to Mr. Vachell. Mr. Vachell, please take possession of this place for me.

[9] *Through conservatory* R. *Vachell crosses behind to* R. *of Chandler.*

(MAUDE *and* MRS. C. *exit.*[9] CHANDLER *is about to speak, but* CYRUS *waves him away, and* VACHELL *ushers him off.*)[10]

[10] *Into conservatory* R.

LADY U.[11]

[11] L.

My dear Mr. Blenkarn, I'm heartily glad we shall have you for a neighbour. You know I have always

considered you a man of the greatest genius. And I adore genius!

CYRUS.[1] [1 C.]

Thank you, Lady Umfraville, I'm not a genius, and I don't like being adored.

SIR S.[2] [2 C.]

If there's anything I can do for you in the county, Mr. Blenkarn,—you may have some idea of going into Parliament!

CYRUS.

No. (*Absorbed.*)

LADY U.

You must come and dine with us on Wednesday at the Court. We expect Lord William Vipond and the Strangeways and old Lady Devenish—

CYRUS.

I'm not used to meeting such people, my lady, and I shouldn't know what to say to them. (*To* VACHELL.)[3] Mr. Vachell, Mr. Pegg will be here directly to go through everything with you. (VACHELL *goes off.*)[4] [3 R.] [4 R.]

SIR S.

But we shall have the pleasure of seeing you at the Court some day?

CYRUS.[5] [5 *In front of settee.*]

No, Sir Seton, I've had to work all my life, and I can't begin to play now. I've done the one thing I set my heart upon. They told me I should never find out the secret, but I did it! (*Triumphantly.*) I did it! And now it's done, I don't know what to do with the rest of my life! I begin to wish I'd got all the ground to go over again!

SIR S.

Come and see us sometimes. We'd do our best to make you feel at home.

CYRUS.

No, Sir Seton, let me be! Let me be! My life's done! But if you want to be kind to me, I have a daughter—(*recollecting*) I had two—and it was in this room—(*giving way*) the day before she left me—[1] (*Breaks down utterly, hides his face in his hands.*)

[1] *Sits* C.

(SIR S. *watches him for a moment, then beckons to* LADY U. *and very quietly and unobtrusively takes her off.*[2] *Pause.*)

[2] R.

CYRUS.[3]

[3] *Rises.*

I can't stop here! I can't stop here! (*Exit.*)[4]

[4] C. *to* L. *dropping his hat as he goes out.*

(*Enter*[5] JESSE PEGG, *in high top hat and frock coat.*)

[5] *At window* L.

JESSE.[6]

[6] *Puts hat on table.*

(*speaking off*[7] *in a very brisk, business-like, but not unkind tone*) Come, come, Mrs. Pegg. You're late again! Always late! Come, come! Are you coming, or are you not?

[7] *At window.*

(NANCY *enters.*)[8]

[8] *At window* L.

NANCY.

I'm very sorry, Jesse! I couldn't help it! (*Meekly.*)

JESSE.[9]

[9] R. C.

(*takes out watch*) Ten minutes this morning! Three minutes yesterday! Seven minutes at the Concert on Monday! Twenty minutes you've wasted for me this week! It's a little too bad! (*Shaking his head severely, but not unkindly.*)

NANCY.[10]

[10] L. C.

Ten minutes this morning looking after your son and heir—three minutes yesterday ordering your dinner—seven minutes on Monday making myself handsome enough to be seen with you.[11]

[11] *Comes to him, hand on his shoulder.*

JESSE.

Handsome is that handsome does, and the wife who wastes her husband's time can have very little memory of all she promised him at the Altar.

NANCY.

Do you forget what you promised me before we went to the Altar?

JESSE.

I have no recollection, my dear, of having promised you anything in particular.

NANCY.

Oh, Jesse! You promised me everything! Everything!

JESSE.

Did I? I don't remember being so foolish!

NANCY.

It's very seldom, dear, that I keep you waiting.

JESSE.

Once a year, my darling, is once too often.

NANCY.

You know, Jesse, I'm always studying you. I'm thinking all day long how I can make you happy!

JESSE.

Quite right, my dear, and you do make me happy.

NANCY.

Then give me a kiss and say you forgive me.

JESSE.

(*kisses her in a very business-like way*) There! There! I forgive you, but don't do it again. I wonder where your father is? [1]

[1] *Turns up stage for a moment.*

NANCY.

To think that he should have bought Tatlow Hall! Oh, if Mary were only alive to know it! [2]

[2] *Crosses to back of set tee.*

[1] C.

JESSE.[1]

Poor Mary! It's strange your father hasn't been able to find out any particulars of her death!

NANCY.

No—if she sailed in that ship, it must have been in another name.

JESSE.

I wish we had followed the track of that young widow-lady.

NANCY.

The one whose baby died—

JESSE.

Yes. It would have been a natural thing under the circumstances for Mary—

NANCY.

[2] R.

(*looking off*)[2] Here's Mr. Chandler coming! Don't let's see him, poor man! It will seem as if we wanted to triumph over him.[3]

[3] *Moving away to* L.

[4] C. *from* R., *comes down* R. *of Nancy.*

(SERVANT *enters.*)[4]

SERVANT.

A letter for Mrs. Pegg, very important. It has been sent on from your own house, ma'am.

NANCY.

Thank you! (*Reads letter, shows great surprise and joy.*)

[5] R.

(CHANDLER *has entered from conservatory.*)[5]

NANCY.

(*with great delight*) Jesse! Read that! Read that!

CHAN.

(*Call 6*). *Mr. C. Maude. Todd. Julian. Mary. Nancy. Jesse.*

(*humbly*) Good morning, Mrs. Pegg. (*Holding out his hand.*)

NANCY.

(*while* JESSE *has read letter*) Good morning, Mr. Chandler. We can't stay, Mr. Chandler.

(*She snatches hold of* JESSE'S *arm, and hurries him off at window, letter in hand, bewildered.*)

Come along, Jesse! Quick! Quick! (*Drags* JESSE *off.*)[1]

(CYRUS *enters.*)[2]

CHAN.

Can't stay! Afraid I want to borrow money of 'em, I suppose.[3] It's a blackguard world to live in![4]

CHAN.[5]

Mr. Blenkarn! Could I speak to you for a moment?

CYRUS.[6]

Well?[7]

CHAN.

I wanted to say that I behaved very badly to you in the past. I ought to have paid you better for your invention. I ought to have taken you into partnership. I hope you will allow me to say I'm very sorry.

CYRUS.[8]

You have said it.

CHAN.

It was strange that I should build the new works for you to occupy!

CYRUS.

Very strange.[9]

CHAN.

Todd tells me in a few years they'll hardly be large enough.

CYRUS.

I daresay.

CHAN.

I thought perhaps you might have a vacancy in some small way where I could be useful to you—some very small way—I'm not particular.

CYRUS.

I don't know of any, Mr. Chandler.

[1] *At window* L.

[2] C. *from* L.

[3] *Going towards window.*

[4] *Cyrus comes down* C. *from* L. *He picks up his hat and is going.*

[5] L. C.

[6] C.

[7] *Comes down* C. *to corner of settee.*

[8] *Embarrassed.*

[9] *Half turned from him.*

CHAN.

It's hard to come down in the world after having been up in it all your life.

CYRUS.[1]

[1] *Turning on him.*

It's hard to be kept down in it all your life without having a chance to get up.

CHAN.

You'll find me a corner—you'll forget the past and give me a chance?

CYRUS.

[2] *Goes up* C.

I've nothing for you, Mr. Chandler.[2]

CHAN.

But in so large a concern, for an old friend—

CYRUS.

What!

CHAN.

I may call myself a friend.

CYRUS.

No, I think not. You might have been my friend once—you remember—

CHAN.

[3] *Crosses to* R.

I remember.[3] I'm sorry I troubled you, but in a few days I may not be able to get even a meal. You wouldn't wish me to starve—

Ready for shouts and music.

CYRUS.

(*taking out note-case*) No, I wouldn't wish you to starve. (*Giving note.*) That will provide for you for the time.

CHAN.

(*effusively*) Thank you! Thank you! Blenkarn! I'm very grateful, most grateful, I assure you! And if any little situation should turn up—

CYRUS.

[4] *Takes no notice and turns away.*

No, no.[4]

CHAN.[0]

I know I don't deserve it, Blenkarn, but there's one who would ask you to forgive me if she were alive. Your daughter Mary—

[0] *Going right.*

CYRUS.

Stop! Don't you mention her name. Don't *you* remind me of her.

CHANDLER *exit.*)[1]

[1] *Through conservatory* R.

CYRUS.

There's one who would ask you to forgive me if she were alive. Your daughter Mary. Oh, my dear, if I could call you back to me, if I could hold you once to my heart! Mary! Mary! If you were alive, dear, this would be your home! Can't you hear me, dear? (*Pause.*) This beautiful home is all yours! I've bought it for you! And you will never come to it![2] Not all the money in the world will buy you back to me for one short hour! What shall I do to your enemies, my dear? They're in my hands! Their very bread is mine to give or to refuse them! I can punish them! I can humble them to the dust! Shall I strike them down, dear, or shall I have mercy? If you were here to guide me, what would you tell me to do? Would you forgive them, dear? I've got my revenge, but it doesn't satisfy me. I don't want them to suffer! I want to forgive them! Tell me, Mary! You were always kind and gentle! Yes, you would forgive them, and I'll forgive them too! That shall be my revenge![3] (*Calls off.*) Mr. Chandler! Mr. Chandler!

[2] *Sits* C.

[3] *Rise, goes to conservatory.*

(CHANDLER, MAUDE *and* MRS. CHANDLER *appear in conservatory. They all enter.*)[4]

[4] R.

CYRUS.[5]

Mr. Chandler! You will be my under-manager at the works at a salary of four hundred pounds a year! And you can live in the house that is vacant there!

[5] *Comes to* C.

CHAN.

It's too good of you, Mr. Blenkarn! I don't deserve it! But I thank you with all my heart.

CYRUS.

Don't thank me! Thank the memory of my poor, wronged girl, that begged forgiveness for you!

MAUDE.

[9] *Crosses to Cyrus.*

You will accept my thanks, Mr. Blenkarn?[9]

CYRUS.

[1] *Maude retires to door of conservatory.*

Yes, my dear, for you were always kind to us. Nancy has told me![1]

[2] *Three distant shouts and music. No 2 march.*

(*Noise of shouting and music outside, growing nearer.*)[2]

CYRUS.

What's the meaning of those shouts?

[3] L.

(TODD *enters hastily at window.*)[3]

[4] *Down* L.

TODD.[4]

My dear Mr. Blenkarn, I congratulate you most heartily! (*Warmly to* CYRUS.) Delighted to find you are the owner of Tatlow Hall! But Captain Chandler is making a mistake—

CYRUS.

Captain Chandler?

TODD.

Yes. Didn't you know he is returning from Africa to-day?

CYRUS.

No. And he's coming here?

TODD.

Yes, of course—They've given him a demonstration for his bravery, and they're bringing him here to his father's house,[5] as he thinks.

[5] *Glancing at Chandler.*

CYRUS.

(*to* CHANDLER) Did you know of this?

CHAN.

I knew he was returning to Tatlow, but it is not by my wish he comes here.

TODD.

And it seems he's bringing his wife with him.

CYRUS.

His wife? !

TODD.

Somebody he's married abroad. (*Looking off.*) They're coming into the house! I'd better go and stop them, shall I?

CYRUS.

No, let them come, let them come, let them come.[1] (*To* CHAN.) What did you let him come here for if you wanted me to forgive you? Do you think I can bury the past now? No, I can't do it. I can't shelter and feed those who robbed me of her, and drove her away from me to die in a strange land. I can't do it. I have tried, but it's beyond me.[2]

[1] *Todd goes up stage.*

[2] *Three shouts, louder.*

(*Band and music nearer, shouts outside.* JULIAN *rushes hurriedly in by window as if to escape crowd.*)

JULIAN.

I've got rid of them at last! And here I am at home! Home! Mr. Blenkarn! (*Meeting* CYRUS.)

CYRUS.

(*seizing him*) My child! You robbed me of my child! My Mary! Answer to me for her! My girl! Give her to me! Do you hear? My child!

JULIAN.

(*disengaging himself*) Forgive me, Mr. Blenkarn! Then you never got our letters explaining?

CYRUS.

Letters? No. Explaining what?

JULIAN.

I suppose we've got here before them. I wrote you explaining I'd done my best to right things.

CYRUS.

How? By bringing your wife here—here to the very place where—? Well, let her come and know the truth about you from me. (JULIAN *goes up to window.*) Your wife! Bring her to me! I want to see her.

JULIAN.

You shall see her!

(*Music outside continued.* MARY, JESSE *and* NANCY *enter.*)[1]

[1] *At window.*

You shall see her! (*Presenting* MARY.) My wife!

MARY.

[2] *March, forte.*

Father! (*Holds out her arms.*)[2]

(CYRUS *cannot believe his eyes, looks at her for a few minutes, then snatches her into his arms and cries like a child.*)

Time.—25 minutes.

CURTAIN.

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